

# 1886

# Priesthood

# Succession

*Nathan*

*&*

*Robert R. Openshaw*

*(Polygamy Story – A Review)*

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# **Priesthood Authority & Succession**

(1886 - 1954)

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## Testimonies & Revelation

*This section begins with a personal preface from the author, and it is followed by the account of John Taylor's 1886 meeting and revelation, which forms the focus of this book. (Note: this is just one of many accounts, and its witness was but one of many. See the Appendix for further details.)*

## Preface

When I was a young missionary one of my companions told an investigator that, if he were to find out that the Book of Mormon were true, then he would know that Joseph Smith was a true Prophet. I thought to myself that this was a fair presumption. But then he told the investigator that, since he would know Joseph was a true prophet, he would therefore have a testimony of the modern LDS Church, and that the current leader of that Church was also a prophet.

Even though I believed the LDS Church to be the same organization Joseph established, and while I thought the current Church President was Joseph Smith's successor<sup>1</sup>, I realized that my companion was asking our investigator to assume too much

There were several problems with the argument my companion was using to try and convince our investigator. Perhaps he was unaware that there have been over a hundred different religious organizations that believe in the Book of Mormon. Yet all of these organizations cannot be right, because they all claim that they alone are the true Church, that they have the true prophet, that all others are false churches, and don't have divine authority.

I didn't point out the fallacy of my companion's arguments that day. I too wanted our investigator to gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon, and I too wanted him to come into our Church. So I just emphasized the need for him to study and gain a testimony of everything he learned, and hoped that he wouldn't just settle the issue of whether to join our faith on just an assumption.

Later through challenging some of my own assumptions I built upon those principles I had a testimony of, and found that there was much more to the Gospel than I had previously realized. Then, as my studies progressed, I discovered that God had ensured that all of the doctrines,

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1 In the office of "President of the Church".

ordinances and laws He restored had continued to the present day, and I came to understand how He had accomplished this. This is how I came to be what the world calls a “Mormon Fundamentalist”.

Taking this course has not come without opposition from others, who, whilst well meaning, have usually tried to convince me with the same type of assumptions my missionary companion had wrongly made all those years ago.

However, I have not let others' misunderstandings determine my beliefs, nor should any of us settle for only assumptions. But instead we should seek to find the same Gospel and authority which the Prophet Joseph restored, and be prepared to explain and defend it. To that end I wrote this book.

## **Dedications**

I am grateful to Robert Openshaw for allowing me to include his review within this book, to all those who reviewed my text before publication; and most of all, to those who made (and continue to make) the sacrifices necessary to keep alive the Gospel in its fullness.

## Introduction

1886 was a difficult year for the Church. A great number of Latter-day Saints were convicted of polygamy, and a great many of them, including Apostle Lorenzo Snow, were put in jail. Some of the Saints who had previously fled to Canada found themselves no longer safe, as it now became against the law there as well. Two thousand Mormon women involved in plural marriages protested the government's persecution against their husbands, but were largely ignored. Ironically, this was during the same year the statue of liberty was erected; however, it seemed that Mormons weren't entitled to such liberty, freedom and justice as the rest of the Americans were. Even Church President John Taylor had to go into hiding as there was a price on his head for his capture; and his picture (along with George Q. Cannons') was featured on wanted posters throughout the territory.

Despite being out of the public's eye, John Taylor still had an important role and mission to fulfill as God's prophet; and even though the United States and many of the Saints had forsaken him, the Lord was mindful of him, and he found refuge in the homes of a few trusted Saints. John Taylor had faced persecution and death before at the hands of the mob that killed Joseph Smith, but as the Lord revealed to Wilford Woodruff half a decade before Taylor went into hiding, "I have preserved my servant John Taylor for a wise purpose in me."<sup>1</sup> This book tells the story of how he fulfilled that prophesy, of those who witnessed it, the evidences of what took place, and addresses the accusations since made against these events.

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1 Wilford Woodruff Journal, 28 December 1880.



## Lorin C. Woolley's Account

While the brethren were at the Carlisle residence [in Murray] in May or June of 1886, letters began to come to President John Taylor from such men as John Sharp<sup>1</sup>, Horace Eldredge, William Jennings, John T. Caine<sup>2</sup>, Abraham Hatch, President Cluff and many other leading men from all over the Church, asking the leaders to do something, as the Gentiles were talking of confiscating their property in connection with the property of the Church.

These letters not only came from those who were living in the Plural Marriage relation, but also from prominent men who were presiding in various offices of the Church who were not living in that relation. They all urged that something be done to satisfy the Gentiles so that their property would not be confiscated.

George Q. Cannon, on his own initiative, selected a committee comprising of himself, Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin S. Richards<sup>3</sup>, John T. Caine and James Jack to get up a statement or Manifesto that would meet the objections urged by the brethren above named. They met from time to time to discuss the situation. From the White home, where President Taylor and companions stopped, after leaving the Carlisle home, they came out to Father's. George Q. Cannon would go and consult with the brethren of the committee, I taking him back and forth each day.

[Some were insisting that the Church issue some kind of edict to be used in Congress, concerning the surrendering of Plural Marriage, and that if some policy were not adopted to

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- 1 The John Taylor Papers contain a letter from President Taylor to John Sharp, dated 2 May 1887 on this subject.
  - 2 "He was President of the convention and strongly urged the adoption of the clause in the proposed constitution prohibiting polygamy, believing this to be the true solution of the 'Mormon' problem, and the only course that would satisfy the government and people of the United States." (*John T. Caine, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:733)
  - 3 The John Taylor Papers contain letters from Taylor on this subject to Franklin S. Richards, dated 19 February & 2 May 1887.

relieve the strain the government would force the Church to surrender. Much was said in their deliberations for and against some edict or manifesto that had been prepared.]<sup>1</sup>

On September 26, 1886, George Q. Cannon, Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin S. Richards, and others, met with President John Taylor at my father's residence at Centerville, Davis County, Utah, and presented a document for President Taylor's consideration.

I had just got back from a three days' trip, during most of which time I had been in the saddle, and being greatly fatigued, I had retired to rest. Between one and two o'clock P. M., Brother Bateman came and woke me up and asked me to be at my father's home where a Manifesto was to be discussed. I went there and found there were congregated Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, L. John Nuttall, Charles Birrell, George Q. Cannon, Franklin S. Richards and Hyrum B. Clawson.

We discussed the proposed Manifesto at length, but we were unable to become united in the discussion. Finally George Q. Cannon suggested that President Taylor take the matter up with the Lord and decide the same the next day. [*President Taylor replied: "Do you think that I would decide on such an important matter as that without taking it to the Lord and get His decision and final word on the matter?"*]<sup>2</sup>

Brothers Clawson and Richards, were taken back to Salt Lake. That evening I was called to act as guard during the first part of the night, notwithstanding the fact that I was greatly fatigued on account of the three days' trip I had just completed.

[Two were usually selected each night, and they took turns standing guard to protect the President from trespass or approaching danger. Exceptional activity was exercised by the U.S. Federal Officers in their prosecutions of the Mormon people on account of their family relations in supposed

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1 Note: non-italicized passages in square brackets come from Lorin Woolley's 1912 affidavit.

2 Note: italicized passages (in square brackets) come from Daniel R. Bateman's affidavits of 1934 & 38.

violation of the Federal Laws.]

The brethren retired to bed soon after nine o'clock. The sleeping rooms were inspected by the guard as was the custom. [Soon after our watch began, Charles H. Birrell reclined on a pallet and went to sleep. President Taylor had entered the south room to retire for the night.] President Taylor's room had no outside door. The windows were heavily screened.

Sometime after the brethren retired and while I was reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I was suddenly attracted to a light appearing under the door leading to President Taylor's room, and was at once startled to hear the voices of men talking there. There were three distinct voices. I was bewildered because it was my duty to keep people out of that room and evidently someone had entered without my knowing it. I made a hasty examination and found the door leading to the room bolted as usual. I then examined the outside of the house and found all the window screens intact. While examining the last window, and feeling greatly agitated, a voice spoke to me, saying, "Can't you feel the Spirit? Why should you worry?"

At this I returned to my post and continued to hear the voices in the room. They were so audible that although I did not see the parties I could place their positions in the room from the sound of the voices. The three voices continued until about midnight, when one of them left, and the other two continued. One of them I recognized as President John Taylor's voice. I called Charles Birrell and we both sat up until eight o'clock the next morning.

[The conversation was carried on all night between President Taylor and the visitor, and never discontinued until the day began to dawn – when it ceased and the light disappeared. ... My father came into the room where we were on watch ...]

When President Taylor came out of his room about eight o'clock of the morning of September 27, 1886, we could scarcely look at him on account of the brightness of his

personage.<sup>1</sup> [His countenance was very bright and could be seen for several hours after.]

He stated, "Brethren, I have had a very pleasant conversation all night with Brother Joseph."<sup>2</sup> (Joseph Smith) I said, "Boss, who is the man that was there until midnight?" He asked, "What do you know about it, Lorin?" I told him all about my experience. He said, "Brother Lorin, that was your Lord."

We had no breakfast, but assembled ourselves in a meeting. I forget who opened the meeting. I was called to offer the benediction. I think my father, John W. Woolley, offered the opening prayer. There were present, at this meeting, in addition to President Taylor, George Q. Cannon, L. John Nuttall, John W. Woolley, Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, Charles Birrell, Daniel R. Bateman, Bishop Samuel Sedden, George Earl, my mother, Julia E. Woolley, my sister, Amy Woolley, and myself. The meeting was held from about nine o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon without intermission, being about eight hours in all.

President Taylor called the meeting to order. He had the Manifesto, which had been prepared under the direction of George Q. Cannon, to be read over again.

*[He asked those present if they were willing to consecrate all that they had to the furtherance of the cause of righteousness in case it is requested of them. They responded they were. He asked if they were willing to give up their lives for the truth in the event it was required. They answered they were.]*

He then *[placed them under covenant to uphold and sustain the principles of the Gospel and]* put each person

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1 "And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."  
(Exodus 34:30)

2 "He [Joseph] yet lives, and is with me where I am." (Revelation to John Taylor; 27 June 1882, Unpublished Revelations 81:19)  
"Elder [Lorin] Woolley testified that he knew the Prophets Joseph, Brigham and Heber lived for he had seen them as they appeared to President John Taylor in brother John Woolley's house." (Andrew Kimball Journal, 25 January 1897.)

under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle.

By that time we were all filled with the Holy Ghost. President Taylor and those present occupied about three hours up to this time. After placing us under covenant, he placed his finger on the document, his person rising from the floor about a foot or eighteen inches, and with countenance animated by the Spirit of the Lord, and raising his right hand to the square, he said, “Sign that document, – never! I would suffer my right hand to be severed from my body first. Sanction it, – never! I would suffer my tongue to be torn from its roots in my mouth before I would sanction it!”

After that he talked for about an hour and then sat down and wrote the revelation which was given him by the Lord upon the question of Plural Marriage<sup>1</sup> [*the 1886 revelation to John Taylor*]. Then he talked to us for some time, and said, “Some of you will be handled and ostracized and cast out from the Church by your brethren because of your faithfulness and integrity to this principle, and some of you may have to surrender your lives because of the same, but woe, woe, unto those who shall bring these troubles upon you.” (Three of us were handled and ostracized for supporting and sustaining this principle<sup>2</sup>. There are only three left who

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1 “There was a revelation that John Taylor received and we have it in his handwriting. We've analyzed the handwriting. It is John Taylor's handwriting and the revelation is reproduced by the Fundamentalists ... The revelation is dated September 27; that fits the account of the meeting, 1886.” (*Reed C. Durham, LDS Stake High Priests meeting, 24 Feb 1974*)

2 “You will live to see men arise in power in the Church who will seek to put down your friends and the friends of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Many will be hoisted because of their money and worldly learning which they seem to be in possession of; and many who are the true followers of our Lord and Savior will be cast down.” (*Joseph Smith to Mosiah Hancock, as recorded in his Journal, p. 19*)  
John Woolley was excommunicated in 1914, Lorin Woolley was excommunicated in 1924, and so was Daniel R. Bateman at some point.  
“... woe unto those who cut men off from the Church for private pique,

were at the meeting mentioned - Daniel R. Bateman, George Earl and myself. So far as I know those of them who have passed away all stood firm to the covenants entered into from that day to the day of their deaths.)

After the meeting referred to, President Taylor had L. John Nuttall write five copies of the revelation. He called five of us together: Samuel Bateman<sup>1</sup>, Charles H. Wilkins, George Q. Cannon, John W. Woolley<sup>2</sup>, and myself. He then set us apart and placed us under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage<sup>3</sup>. We were given authority to ordain others if necessary to carry this work on; and they in turn to be given authority to ordain others when necessary, under the direction of the worthy senior (by ordination), so that there should be no cessation in the work.<sup>4</sup>

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or to exercise undue dominion, or for any reason not prompted by truth and righteousness!" (*Millennial Star* 40:262)

- 1 In 1888, John M. Whitaker recorded in his Diary that Samuel Bateman had told him of some "very interesting incidents that occurred while he was with the late President John Taylor," but he says he did not include them because they didn't fit in with the direction the Church was then taking. (*Whitaker Journal*, 16 September 1888.)

"Samuel [Bateman] spoke of the 8 hour meeting in Centerville, the sermon of John Taylor there and the subsequent calling of certain men there." (*Life of Samuel Bateman*, Olive A.K. Neilson, 1944).

- 2 In the Spring of 1839, Joseph Smith, Sr. gave the young John W. Woolley a Patriarchal Blessing which prophesied, "Thou wilt obtain blessings, glory and honor, and through it thou wilt receive keys, world of knowledge and power, and thou wilt be called the Lord's anointed."
- 3 "... no year will ever pass, ... from now until the coming of the Savior, when children will not be born in Plural Marriage. And I make this prophecy in the name of Jesus Christ." (*Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff, Quarterly Conference in Colonia Juarez, 18-19 November 1900.*)  
"... the time would never come when children of Polygamous parents would cease to be born in the Church." (*Apostle Marriner W. Merrill, Rudger Clawson Diary, 11 July 1899.*)
- 4 A.B. Irvine told me that Apostle Woodruff told him that a certain number of worthy people had been commissioned to keep alive the principle of plural marriage. (*Carl Ashby Badger – Apostle Reed Smoot's secretary - Journal, 8 October 1904.*  
"President Taylor died in exile for this principle and he gave men

*[He counseled us not to begin our work until told to do so by proper authority.]* He then gave each of us a copy of the Revelation.

I am the only one of the five now living, and so far as I know all five of the brethren remained true and faithful to the covenants they entered into, and to the responsibilities placed upon them at that time.

During the eight hours we were together, and while President Taylor was talking to us, he frequently arose and stood above the floor, and his countenance and being were so enveloped by light and glory that it was difficult for us to look upon him.

He stated that the document, referring to the Manifesto, was from the lower regions.<sup>1</sup> He stated that many of the things he had told us we would forget and they would be taken from us, but that they would return to us in due time as needed, and from this fact we would know that the same was from the Lord. This has been literally fulfilled. Many of the things I forgot, but they are coming to me gradually, and those things that come to me are as clear as on the day on which they were given.<sup>2</sup>

President Taylor said that the time would come when many of the Saints would apostatize because of this principle. *[“Some of you will live to see the time when there will scarcely be a family among the Latter day Saints that will be united on all the principles of the Gospel.”]* He said “one-half of this people will apostatize over the principle for which we

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authority to perform the ceremony of marriage, which authority I have been told was never revoked.” (*Mission President to Apostle Francis M. Lyman, 19 Oct 1906, Quinn – Origins of Power*)

- 1 “the powers of hell will do their utmost to get this people to give up that holy law which God designs to maintain.” (*Brigham Young, Mosiah Hancock Journal, Spring 1863*)  
“We have made a covenant with death, And with hell we are in agreement.” (*Isaiah 28:15*)
- 2 “Brother Joseph said he had taught the Twelve all that he knew concerning the order of the kingdom, but the difficulty was they could not remember it as he told them, but when it was necessary they would not be at a loss for understanding; ...” (*Brigham Young, 16 February 1847, Manuscript Addresses 1:143*)

are now in hiding, yea, and possibly one-half of the other half,”<sup>1</sup> (rising off the floor while making the statement). He also said the day will come when a document similar to that (Manifesto) then under consideration would be adopted by the Church, following which, “apostasy and whoredom would be rampant in the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

He said that in the time of the seventh president of this Church, the Church would go into bondage<sup>3</sup> both temporally and spiritually and in that day (the day of bondage) the One Mighty and Strong spoken of in the 85th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants<sup>4</sup> would come.

Among many other things stated by President Taylor on this occasion was this: “I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will

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- 1 “What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of 'Mormonism'? Simply to renounce, abrogate or apostatize from the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in its fullness.” (*Pres. Charles W. Penrose, Deseret News, 23 April 1885*)  
“To be at peace with the government and in harmony with their fellow citizens who are not of their faith, and to share in the confidence of the Government and the people, our people have voluntarily put aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle.” (*First Presidency, Petition of Amnesty, 19 Dec 1891*)
  - 2 “You men and you women that lift up your voices against that holy principle [plural marriage] that has been introduced among this people, the time will come when your daughters will run these streets as common harlots” (*Pres. Heber C. Kimball, as related in General Conference, Oct 1901, p. 32*)  
“The sin of adultery is running rampant through the Church.” (*Harold B. Lee, Ensign 4:7:101*)
  - 3 “A spirit of speculation and extravagance will take possession of the Saints, and the result will be financial bondage.” (*Pres. Heber C. Kimball to Amanda Wilcox, 1868*)  
Heber J. Grant mortgaged the [Salt Lake] temple for \$30 million in 1923 (for 50 years) to help out the Utah and Idaho Sugar Co.
  - 4 “And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God;” (*D&C 85:7*)



remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the seventh president, and that there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.”<sup>1</sup>

John Taylor set the five mentioned apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as they remained on the earth; and while doing so, the Prophet Joseph Smith stood by directing the proceedings. Two of us had not met the Prophet Joseph Smith in his mortal lifetime, and we – Charles H. Wilkins and myself – were introduced to him and shook hands with him.

*(signed) Lorin C. Woolley, 1929*

I was privileged to be at the meeting of September 27, 1886, spoken of by Brother Woolley, I myself acting as one of the guards for the brethren during those exciting times.

The proceedings of the meeting as related by Brother Woolley are correct in every detail. I was not present [in the room] when the five spoken of by Brother Woolley were set apart for special work, but have on different occasions heard the details of the same related by Lorin C. Woolley and John W. Woolley, and from all the circumstances with which I am familiar, I firmly believe the testimony of these two brethren to be true.

*4 May, 1934, Daniel R. Bateman, Sworn Statement*

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1 “... the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 169)

“Surely a man cannot possess an appendage to the Priesthood without possessing the Priesthood itself, which he cannot obtain unless it be authoritatively conferred upon him.” (*Joseph F. Smith, Improvement Era* 4:394, March 1901)

“The year of 1886 is past and gone. It has been an important year in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It has sent to prison hundreds of the leading men of the Church and driven into exile the Presidency of the Church and Twelve Apostles and many other leading men all for obeying the celestial law of God and the patriarchal order of marriage and our nation are uniting in passing unconstitutional Laws for the purpose of destroying the Latter-day Saints from off the Earth.”

*Wilford Woodruff Journal, 31 December 1886.*

# **The 1886 Revelation**

A Revelation to John Taylor  
on the Continuation of Celestial Plural Marriage  
27 September 1886  
*Centerville, Utah*

My son John: You have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant, and how far it is binding upon my people.

2        Thus saith the Lord: All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name, unless they are revoked by me or by my authority, and how can I revoke an everlasting covenant;

3        For I the Lord am everlasting, and my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand forever.

4        Have I not given my word in great plainness on this subject?

5        Yet have not great numbers of my people been negligent in the observance of my law and the keeping of my commandment, and yet I have borne with them these many years because of the perilous times. And furthermore, it is pleasing to me that men should use their free agency in these matters.

6        Nevertheless, I the Lord do not change, and my word and my covenants and my law do not.

7        And as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph: All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law.

8        And have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed, and would enter into my glory, they must do the works of Abraham.

9        I have not revoked this law nor will I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so, Amen.

*John Taylor Papers, Church Historians Office  
(Unpublished Revelations Chap. 88)*



# Issues & Evidence

## Section Overview

### **The Authenticity and Meaning of the 1886 Revelation**

*What evidence do we have that John Taylor received the 1886 revelation, and what did it mean to him and his associates?*

### **Keeping Eternal Laws & Fulfilling Prophecy**

*What evidence do we have that the 1886 meeting happened?*

### **Has Joseph Smith Been Resurrected?**

*What evidence do we have that Joseph Smith has been resurrected?*

### **The Last Prophecies of John Taylor**

*How were John Taylor's prophecies literally fulfilled?*

### **Losing the Priesthood**

*How has the Priesthood been lost to most of the LDS Church?*

*Note: These chapters come from previously published articles, and although all were written in mind for a future book such as this one, as they were originally published separately, some material may be repeated.*

## **The Authenticity and Meaning of the 1886 Revelation**

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1886 President John Taylor received what many have called his most controversial revelation. Its existence has been debated since the 1930's, and its standing and meaning have been called into question ever since.

It was received whilst Taylor was in hiding to avoid imprisonment for living plural marriage, and at a time when several Church members were calling upon him to end that practice. These facts are not disputed, even by the document's critics. Neither have there been any suggestions that the text has been altered in any way, which is as follows:

“My son John: You have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant, and how far it is binding upon my people.

Thus saith the Lord: All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name, unless they are revoked by me or by my authority, and how can I revoke an everlasting covenant; For I the Lord am everlasting, and my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand forever.

Have I not given my word in great plainness on this subject? Yet have not great numbers of my people been negligent in the observance of my law and the keeping of my commandment, and yet I have borne with them these many years because of the perilous times. And furthermore, it is pleasing to me that men should use their free agency in these matters.

Nevertheless, I the Lord do not change, and my word and my covenants and my law do not. And as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph: All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law. And have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed, and would enter into my glory, they

must do the works of Abraham.

I have not revoked this law nor will I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so, Amen.”

Before looking at how this revelation has been differently interpreted, we will examine the evidence for its authenticity. Because if it isn’t genuine it may not matter what it means.

## **Evidence for the 1886 Revelation**

The earliest evidence we have of this revelation is at a meeting of the Quorum of Twelve one week prior to the release of the Manifesto, when Apostle John W. Taylor informed his fellow brethren that:

“My father, when President of the Church, sought to find a way to evade the conflict between the Saints and government on the question of plural marriage, but the Lord said it was an eternal and unchangeable law and must stand.”<sup>1</sup>

A couple of years later, at a similar meeting, he gave some additional details on how he came into possession of the original copy of this revelation:

“Among my father's papers I found a revelation given him of the Lord, and which is now in my possession, in which the Lord told him that the principle of plural marriage would never be overcome. President Taylor desired to have it suspended, but the Lord would not permit it to be done.”<sup>2</sup>

By 1909 a copy of the revelation appeared in the Church Archives under the heading:

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1 Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 30 September 1890.

2 Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 29 March 1892.

“Revelation given to John Taylor, September 27, 1886, copied from the original manuscript by Joseph F. Smith, Jr., August 3, 1909.”<sup>1</sup>

From this we learn of the date of John Taylor’s revelation, and that Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., who was at the time the Church Historian and a future Church President, believed he had made his copy from the original manuscript. A couple of years later, at the trial of John W. Taylor, explained the circumstances behind this:

“It is true I obtained a copy of this revelation from brother Rodney Badger. He let me take the original and I made a copy and filed it in the historian’s office. This was but a short time ago.”<sup>2</sup>

It was at this meeting that members of the Twelve asked John W. Taylor in detail about the revelation. Much of what they discussed had to do with its meaning which we will return to later, but there was one more evidence to its authenticity:

*“President Lyman:* When did you find this revelation?

*J. W. Taylor:* I found it on his desk immediately after his death when I was appointed administrator of his estate.”<sup>3</sup>

Here we learn that it was not just amongst President Taylor’s papers, but on his own desk. But what happened to it after that date, before it came into the hands of the Church historian? For this history we are indebted to a member of the LDS Church’s M.I.A. Board, Douglas M. Todd Sr., who in 1934 wrote its history in his journal:

*“[After the revelation was received] A copy in President*

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1 Historical Department, LDS Church Archives.

2 John W. Taylor File, February 22 and March 1, 1911.

3 John W. Taylor File, 22 February 1911.



Taylor's handwriting was taken to the Salt Lake Temple, and when danger of raiding and confiscation increased, it with other sacred records, was turned over to William Salmon to be placed somewhere to be safe. This revelation was delivered to John W. Taylor and for a time was in the custody of Rodney Badger in a deposit box at the Utah National Bank, but was finally returned to John W. Taylor.”

Sometime before his death, John W. married his secretary, Ellen Sanberg, as his sixth wife. After his death in 1916, Ellen took possession of the document. She went to work for L. N. Stohl at the Beneficial Life and he got the revelation and made photographic copies of it.

Soon after this, Nellie Taylor said that one night after his death, John W. came to her with a troubled look on his face, and it was made known to her that he was concerned about this revelation. Nellie went to Mill Creek and Ellen reluctantly surrendered it. Nellie took it to Frank Y. Taylor and asked that he deliver it to the Church Historian. Frank delayed and some inquiry was made about it. So Nellie again saw him about it, but instead of taking it to the Historian's office, he took it to President Grant and asked him if it was genuine and in the handwriting of his father. President Grant said it was. Brother Taylor asked how he could get around it. “I am not going to try to get around it,” replied President Grant.<sup>1</sup>

Yet by the 1930's the revelation's authenticity (and the events surrounding it) became such a controversial subject that the First Presidency issued a statement about it, written by J. Reuben Clark. Below is the section of that statement that dealt directly with the revelation:

“It is alleged that on September 26-27, 1886, President John Taylor received a revelation from the Lord, the purported text of which is given in publications circulated apparently by or at the instance of this same [*Mormon Fundamentalist*] organization.

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1 Douglas M. Todd, Sr., 1 September 1934.

As to this pretended revelation it should be said that the archives of the Church contain no such revelation; the archives contain no record of any such revelation, nor any evidence justifying a belief that any such revelation was ever given. From the personal knowledge of some of us, from the uniform and common recollection of the presiding quorums of the Church, from the absence in the Church archives of any evidence whatsoever justifying any belief that such a revelation was given, we are justified in affirming that no such revelation exists.”<sup>1</sup>

As to the accuracy of this statement (which was signed by Heber J. Grant), Mormon scholar Richard S. VanWagoner commented in his book, “Mormon Polygamy”, that “Whether unintentionally so or not, Clark’s statement proved to be incorrect on virtually every point.”<sup>2</sup> As we have already read the Church Historian already admitted that there was a copy in the archives, and that he had copies of it from the original.<sup>3</sup> Heber J. Grant and other Apostles were also at meetings in which the revelation was discussed in 1890, 1892 and 1911, and so could hardly be justified in denying that such a revelation existed. Yet, so that no future leaders could claim ignorance, Frank Y. Taylor donated the original handwritten 1886 revelation to the Church the month after the First Presidency letter was written.<sup>4</sup>

What brought about such an attack against this revelation? J. Reuben Clark was the nephew of John W. Woolley, in whose home Taylor had received the revelation in 1886, and Woolley’s son Lorin (his cousin) had been instrumental in distributing the revelation and sharing his story about the events surrounding it. They presented a challenge to

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1 Official Statement, Deseret News, Church Section, 18 June 1933.

2 Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy – A History*, 1989, p. 186 (2nd ed.)

3 John W. Taylor also had given a copy to Wilford Woodruff in 1887, which resided in the archives. Ibid.

4 Ibid.

Clark's authority and stance on plural marriage, one which he felt he could not let go unanswered. However, his statement has subsequently been undermined as the evidence of the revelation's authenticity has come forward.

How did the Mormon Fundamentalists he refers to come into possession of the revelation? Lorin Woolley claimed to have been at a meeting at which the revelation was presented to a select group of Saints. The earliest mention of this was to Nettie Taylor in 1893 (although he had spoken about related events a couple of years earlier):<sup>1</sup>

“Lorin said that right next door on the adjoining farm of John W. Woolley, President John Taylor was in hiding the night of September 26, 1886, when he received a revelation concerning the Principle and set men apart to continue it regardless of what the Church might do officially on the matter. Lorin said that he was one of the men set apart.”<sup>2</sup>

The next recollection is from Byron H. Allred Jr., who related to his son that when he “was a young man of 17 years in St. Charles, Bear Lake County, Idaho, in 1887, when Apostle John W. Taylor visited the Saints there.”:

“He took father aside on that occasion and read the 1886 revelation to him. Apostle Taylor told the writer's father that the principle of plural marriage would never be done away and would be lived.”<sup>3</sup>

In line with Clark's 1933 First Presidency statement, other Apostles took essentially the same position on the revelation when asked about it, although sometimes making some interesting admissions, as Anthony W. Ivins did just a

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1 22 September 1891, Letter of George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 20 May 1921.

2 Family Kingdom, 1951, Samuel W. Taylor, p. 72.

3 Rulon Allred, *The Most Holy Principle*, Vol. 4, Sec. 7, 85. See A Leaf in Review, Byron H. Allred, Jr., p. 190.

year after the 1933 statement:

“The latter purported [1886] revelation of John Taylor has no standing in the Church. I have searched carefully, and all that can be found is a piece of paper found among President Taylor's effects after his death. It was written in pencil and only a few paragraphs which had no signature at all.”<sup>1</sup>

Ivin's objection to the revelation is intriguing, because, he admits the revelation was found amongst Taylor's personal papers, and makes the point of adding that it didn't have Taylor's signature upon it, although – whilst he may have not realized it – Joseph Smith's revelations were not signed either.

Later that same year, another Apostle, Melvin J. Ballard, in a letter to Eslie Jenson, made a similar statement, with one extra detail of interest:

“The pretended revelation of John Taylor never had his signature added to it but was written in the form of a revelation and undoubtedly was in his handwriting.”<sup>2</sup>

Although he calls it a pretended revelation he admits it was written in John Taylor's “own handwriting.” These contradictions were not lost on future later historians, and upon weighing the evidence Dean C. Jesse, a faithful LDS Church scholar “concluded in his study that it is highly probable that such a revelation does exist.”<sup>3</sup> This was cooberated by Dr. Reed C. Durham in 1974, who at the time was both President of the Mormon History Association and Coordinator of the LDS Church's Seminary and Institute program. At a Stake High Priest's meeting he stated conclusively that:

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1 Anthony W. Ivins Letter File, 10 February 1934.

2 31 December 1934, Marriage - Ballard-Jenson Correspondence, p. 17.

3 Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought; Autumn, 1970, pg. 15, footnote 10.

“There was a revelation that John Taylor received and we have it in his handwriting. We've analyzed the handwriting. It is John Taylor's handwriting and the revelation is reproduced by the Fundamentalists. ... The revelation is dated September 27; that fits the account of the meeting, 1886.”

Yet in that same year Mark E. Petersen wrote in his book, *The Way of the Master*, that:

“To justify their own rebellion, certain recalcitrant brethren ... concocted a false revelation, allegedly given to President John Taylor in 1886.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Petersen was unaware of the evidence, but this seems to have been the last time a General Authority has denied the revelations authenticity. A couple of years later J. Max Anderson, acting under Peterson's direction wrote an anti-Fundamentalist treatise titled “Mormon Fundamentalism” in which he referred to it as “a little known, but authentic revelation of the Lord to John Taylor,”<sup>2</sup> Although this part of his manuscript never made it into print (probably because of Peterson's influence), it wasn't long before other Church scholars were concluding that it was a genuine revelation from their own research.

To B.Y.U. Professor of History, D. Michael Quinn, the existence of the 1886 revelation wasn't a matter of speculation, but of historical fact, to which he gave additional details, in his famous 1985 *Dialogue* article, on the background behind the revelation and how Taylor acted after receiving it personally:

“During this 1884-86 period there were numerous appeals by prominent Mormons and friendly non-Mormons for President Taylor to issue a statement or new revelation that would set aside the practice of plural

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1 Mark E. Petersen, *The Way of the Master*, 1974, p. 57.

2 J. Max Anderson, *Mormon Fundamentalism* (unpublished), 1976.

marriage.<sup>1</sup> Burdened by his own exile and the sufferings of other Church members, John Taylor ‘asked the Lord if it would not be right under the circumstances to discontinue plural marriages,’ in response to which President Taylor received ‘the word of the Lord to him in which the Lord said that plural marriage was one of His eternal laws and that He had established it, that man had not done so and that He would sustain and uphold his saints in carrying it out.’<sup>2</sup> Presently available documents of 1885-86 are silent about this revelation, but much later documentation and commentary identified this revelation as having been received by John Taylor on 27 September 1886.”<sup>3</sup>

Quinn was later asked about the revelation in the question and answer session, following a talk given in 1991, and responded:

“As a historian, I find that there is abundant evidence to demonstrate that the 1886 revelation occurred, that John Taylor was being asked to suspend or end the practice of plural marriage. And in response to a question relating to that, God told him in a revelation, a fairly brief revelation, that that should not occur and that God could not revoke the practice or principle of plural marriage.

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- 1 D. Michael Quinn, *LDS Church Authority and Plural Marriage*, Dialogue, 18:1:28-30, Spring 1985. Fn. 88: JD 25:309, 26:7; Deseret Evening News, 23 April, 5 June 1885; Juvenile Instructor 20:136 (1 May 1885), 20:156 (15 May 1885); Abraham H. Cannon Diary, 13 May 1885; Heber J. Grant Journal, 13 May 1885; Clark, Messages of the First President 3:27; George Q. Cannon Diary, 6 Nov. 1885 etc.
  - 2 Ibid, fn. 89: Statement of John W. Taylor to the apostles in Heber J. Grant, Journal, 30 Sept. 1890, also in First Presidency Office Journal, 2 Oct. 1889, copy in CR 1/48, LDS Church Archives; in Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 1 April 1892; in Minutes of the Quorum of Twelve, 22 Feb. and 1 March 1911, LDS Church Archives. ...
  - 3 Ibid. fn. 90: “Revelation to President John Taylor, September 27, 1886, copied from the original manuscript by Joseph F. Smith, Jr., August 3, 1909,” in Joseph Fielding Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives. ...

... I really find it curious that there has been such a strenuous effort on the part of L.D.S. Church members and leaders to deny the existence of the 1886 revelation, because it makes them vulnerable to denying something that can be demonstrated as having occurred.”<sup>1</sup>

Professor B. Carmon Hardy, in one of his landmark studies on the subject of plural marriage, “Doing the Works of Abraham”, published in 2007, concurred with Quinn:

“If the location of the original manuscript remains undisclosed, evidence for its existence is nevertheless extensive. Not only have photocopies of the document circulated for years, and not only did contemporaries refer to it, but its content agrees with other statements President Taylor and his colleagues made at the time.”<sup>2</sup>

Even the Anti-Fundamentalists have had to admit that the 1886 revelation is genuine. In 1992, Brian C. Hales was still saying, “the authenticity of the purported 1886 revelation to John Taylor is still questioned.”<sup>3</sup> Yet by 2006 he made the following admission:

“One such revelation was written on Monday, September 27, 1886. While some observers have questioned its authenticity, the document, though unsigned, appears to be in John Taylor’s handwriting and seems to be genuine.”<sup>4</sup>

Although this is not a ringing endorsement, the acceptance that it is probably genuine is quite a concession on behalf of someone trying to defend the Church’s official

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1 D. Michael Quinn talk, RCA Building, 11 August 1991.

2 B. Carmon Hardy, *Doing the Works of Abraham*, 2007, p. 325.

3 Brian C. Hales, *The Priesthood of Modern Polygamy*, 1992, Chapter 4.

4 *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*, Brian C. Hales, 2006, p. 37.

stance. But the revelation of 1886 has been weighed by Mormon scholars of note and found to be genuine, which puts the Church and its apologists in a precarious position. To this they believe they have found a solution – they have introduced a different interpretation of what the revelation is about.

### **New Interpretations**

As has already been quoted, the earliest understanding we have of the 1886 revelation is from John Taylor's son who recounted that his "father, when President of the Church, sought to find a way to evade the conflict between the Saints and government on the question of plural marriage, but the Lord said it was an eternal and unchangeable law and must stand."

John W. was 28 in 1886, and had been called as an Apostle two years earlier. When he made this statement he was in full standing with the Church, and it represents the interpretation accepted by most scholars<sup>1</sup> that the revelation:

- Was prompted by a question about plural marriage.
- Was speaking about plural marriage as a covenant, law and commandment – and as a practice.
- Was considered the word of the Lord, whether or not the Church officially canonized it.
- Was intended to be binding whether or not the Church officially presented, voted upon and accepted it.
- Says that the practice of plural marriage would continue without abrogation or end.

And – it has also been argued – that John Taylor's actions (and those of Woodruff and Smith after him) show the results of this revelation or other revelations similar to it. Yet in the last 20 years – as it has become more apparent that the revelation is authentic – alternative interpretations have arisen

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<sup>1</sup> See Quinn, Van Wagoner, and Hardy's research. It could be argued that Clark and Peterson had this same interpretation, or else they would have had no reason for disputing authenticity of revelation.



from apologists for the Church. We will look at five such views and what John Taylor, his contemporaries and other revelations had to say about them.

## **Arguments regarding the scope of the revelation**

1. Was it just a personal revelation applying to John Taylor alone?

It would seem that those who argue this point overlook a great deal of references within the revelation itself to God's people. The revelation begins with a question of "how far it is binding upon my people", then speaks of "those calling themselves by my name" (an obvious reference to all Latter-day Saints), and the last three sentences all refer to "those who would enter into my glory" (or variations thereof). Would any of us not want to be included in those he is referring to?

Yet the revelation did have an obvious effect on Taylor personally as detailed by one scholar:

"Such a revelation on this date would explain the dramatic change in John Taylor's personal circumstances and resistance to federal laws against polygamy. Until 1886, John Taylor's public and private defense against the U.S. government was the argument that he had married his fifteen wives prior to the 1862 Morrill Act, that his last polygamous child had been born in 1881 and therefore all his polygamous children were legitimized by the provisions of the Edmunds Act of 1882, ... Yet less than three months after the recording of the 1886 revelation, seventy-eight-year-old John Taylor married as a plural wife twenty-six-year-old Josephine Roueche on 19 December 1886. The ceremony was performed by her father, a high priest, and witnessed by George Q. Cannon and one of the 'Underground' guards, Charles H. Wilcken. At the end of 1886, President Taylor had chosen for the first time in his life to specifically violate federal laws on polygamy and

unlawful cohabitation, and he lived with his new bride at the Roueche home in Kaysville, Utah, the remaining seven months of his life.”<sup>1</sup>

2. Was it just applied to the period of John Taylor’s presidency?

Was President Taylor asking about eternal principles or temporary problems, and what did the Lord have to say about how far the revelation applied? The text makes it clear that Taylor was asking about an “everlasting covenant.” But what about the language of the rest of the revelation, does it give the impression that it was limited in time and who it applied to? Let us examine a few of its sentences and the implications of limiting their scope to just the couple of years before Taylor died:

*“All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name”*

Would God ever cease to ask us to obey the commandments? Do we still call ourselves by His name?

*“My everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand forever.”*

How can this only apply to Taylor's presidency? Could “forever” have stopped when he died?

*“I the Lord do not change and my word and my covenants and my law do not”*

Is this really a relative statement? Is it the Lord, His word, covenants, and law that have changed or others beliefs about or acceptance of them?

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<sup>1</sup> LDS Church Authority and Plural Marriage, D. Michael Quinn, Dialogue, Spring 1985.

*“All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law”*

Does this cease to apply if we live at a different time (than in which the revelation was given)?

*“I have not revoked this law nor will I.”*

What part of this sentence is ambiguous? How can it be interpreted in any way to say that the law spoken of has been suspended, or that we are excused for not living it?

3. Was it not binding upon the Church?  
(Vox Populi, Vox Dei)<sup>1</sup>

It is argued that as the 1886 revelation supposedly was never presented for the authorities to sustain or approve it that – as they did not have the chance to accept it – we are not obliged to live it. Yet we learn from Nellie Taylor, the wife of Apostle John W. Taylor that:

“When President Taylor received this revelation at the home of John W. Woolley at Centerville, he sent a messenger to Salt Lake asking those of the Presidency and Twelve who were there to meet him at Centerville. ... The revelation was submitted and received.”<sup>2</sup>

Some have tried to cast doubt on this account by claiming that it was saying that the Apostles were sent for the very same day the revelation was received, and by pointing out that few of them were available at the time. However, there is nothing in the text that precludes the Apostles having been sent for days or weeks later, or them coming to see him over a period of time as they were available. The important point of the story is that they ultimately accepted it. But what

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1 Latin: “The voice of the people is the voice of God”

2 Douglas M. Todd, Sr. Journal, 1 September 1934.

if they had not approved, what difference would it have made?

The scriptures give us no indication that a vote was taken to approve God's revelation to Noah to flood the earth. There may indeed have been people, who may have considered themselves part of the ancient church, who objected to that deluge happening without their approval right up until the point that the water rose above their necks, and left them unable to verbalize their objections any longer. Likewise, one cannot easily imagine the wayward Israelites being asked to sustain the Ten Commandments, or the possibility of Moses going back to the Lord to ask for an easier set of rules, if they rejected them.

Here we must refer again to the question of how far it is binding on God's people, which is the question the revelation began with. Did God think when He gave His words that they would be of no relevance or importance unless the Church members voted on them? He said His "word" and His "covenants" do not change. Whether they are presented for approval or not will not alter what He has said and promised. He already stated that "great numbers of my people have been negligent in the observance of my law and the keeping of my commandment." Would these same people (the negligent ones) be the best to decide if the Lord's words applied to them?

A faithful member of the Church brought to President George Q. Cannon's attention that some of the Saints were beginning to take the view that "when Joseph, the Seer, gave a revelation it must be tested in this way – that is, it must first be presented to the High Council or the Twelve Apostles, for their approval," etc. This was Cannon's response to that idea:

"It seems nonsensical that the Prophet of God should submit to such a test as this, and not deem the revelations he received authentic until they had the approval of the different quorums of the Church. They were authentic and divinely inspired, whether any man or body of men received them or not. Their reception or non-reception of them would not affect in the least their

divine authenticity. ...

Joseph himself had too high a sense of his prophetic office and the authority he had received from the Lord to ever submit the revelations which he received to any individual or to any body, however numerous, to have them pronounce upon their validity.”<sup>1</sup>

Cannon did admittedly suggest that Church members could vote to see if they consider something binding, but he never proposed that this could have any effect on the authenticity of a revelation itself. Joseph Smith’s revelation on Plural Marriage was not canonized until 1876, yet for over 30 years before men were still commanded to obey it. But what if the Saints as a body did decide to reject a revelation, what would that status of it (and them) be? President B.H. Roberts mused upon this possibility and concluded the following:

“Suppose a law is promulgated before the Latter-Day Saints, and the Church, in the exercise of the liberty which God has conferred upon them, reject it, the question is then asked, what remains? The truth remains. The action of the Church has not affected it in the least.

The truth remains just as true as if the Church had accepted it. Its action simply determines the relationship of the members to that truth; and if they reject it, the truth still remains; and it is my opinion that they would not make further progress until they accepted the rejected truth.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 George Q. Cannon, *Juvenile Instructor*, 1 January 1891, vol. 26:13-14.

2 B. H. Roberts, *Improvement Era* Vol. 8:363-4.

## Arguments regarding the correct interpretation of the revelation

### 4. Is it still being fulfilled (by widowers remarrying)?

There are some who believe that the revelation received in 1886 is indeed about plural marriage, but have come up with a novel explanation as to how it is still being fulfilled. They suggest that those men who remarry after their first wives have died are still keeping the law the Lord promised would never be revoked.

In the days when plural marriage was lived with the encouragement of the LDS Church, at least one woman similarly wondered whether her husband could live the law if he had dead women sealed to him. She inquired, “What is the difference in a man having dead wives sealed to him than living women, so that he has one living wife; will they gain as great an exaltation if they have dead women sealed to them as they would if they had living women sealed to them?” To which the Prophet John Taylor responded:

“This Law pertains more particularly to the living, ... You seem to be desirous of having dead women sealed to your husband instead of living ones, where as the law pertaining to these matters does not put things in that shape. We read that the Lord commanded and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife, and it is for wives as well as husbands to perform their part in relation to these matters as explicitly stated in verse 64 [*of D&C 132*] wherein it is said: If “he teaches unto her the law of my Priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus President John Taylor made it clear that the law could not be lived without having more than one living

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1 John Taylor to Malinda Merrill, 19 January 1883, John Taylor Papers.

woman sealed to a man. Without that the wives would not have the opportunity to perform their part in the law. It might also be argued that without multiple women married to one man at the same time, it is neither plural marriage, nor could they and their husband ever learn the lessons and experiences the Lord intended to come only by way of this principle.

## 5. It isn't speaking about plural marriage?

The Lord states in the revelation itself that He has “given [*His*] word in great plainness on this subject” What subject is he speaking about? He uses a couple of different phrases to describe the “law” and “commandment” he is addressing, such as the “new and everlasting covenant” and “the works of Abraham.” Perhaps the most telling line is the one in which the Lord states that “great numbers of my people have been negligent in the observance of my law and the keeping of my commandment.” What law and commandment were so many of the Saints at that time being negligent in keeping?

In early 1886 John Taylor received a letter from an anonymous Latter-day Saint, which reminded him of the negligence most of the Saints were showing towards one particular law. Its author wrote to him:

“You proclaim to the people that there are 2 percent polygamists and 98 percent monogamists, now with half of those in polygamy going back on it, and the other half hiding away, what do you expect to accomplish? ... Order an election of all the people and let them say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ without fear or hinderance, and you will see for yourself how they feel, ...”<sup>1</sup>

That this view was widespread is sustained by Professor Glen Vernon of B.Y.U. University, who concluded that: “Even under legal and religiously approved

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1 Taylor papers, Manuscripts, U of U Library.

circumstances, only a minority wished to practice polygyny.”<sup>1</sup>

The “New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage” was first mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 131, given a few months prior to Section 132 which also uses the phrase “New and Everlasting Covenant” to refer to marriage also. In a revelation on plural marriage received by John Taylor, the Lord told him that:

“This law is a Celestial Law and pertains to a Celestial Kingdom. It is a new and everlasting covenant, and appertains to thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, and eternal increase in the Celestial Kingdom of God.”<sup>2</sup>

Wilford Woodruff, who knew Joseph well, and learned from him about “the new and everlasting covenant”, made it clear what he believed the phrase to be referring to:

“When a man, according to the revelation, [*Section 132*] marries a wife under the holy order which God has revealed, and then marries another in the same way, he enters into the New and Everlasting Covenant ...”<sup>3</sup>

“The new and everlasting covenant is marriage, plural marriage – men may say that with their single marriage the same promises and blessings had been granted. Why cannot I attain to as much as with three or four? ... It is the eternity of the marriage covenant, and includes the plurality of wives and takes both to make the law.”<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, the phrase “works of Abraham” is from Joseph Smith’s 1843 revelation on marriage, and his contemporaries, like Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball,

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1 Professor Glen Vernon, BYU, *Sociology of Mormonism*, p. 209.

2 Revelation to John Taylor, June 25 & 26, 1882, John Taylor papers.

3 Wilford Woodruff to Bishop Samuel A. Woolley, 22 May 1888; Wilford Woodruff Letterbook, p. 38.

4 Wilford Woodruff, Quarterly Conference, 3&4 March 1883, Utah Historical Record, p. 271.



used it to refer to plural marriage also:

“Why do we believe in and practice polygamy? ... this is the religion of Abraham, and, unless we do the works of Abraham, we are not Abraham’s seed and heirs according to promise.”<sup>1</sup>

“They [Joseph and Hyrum] had to do the works of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in order to be admitted where they are – they had to be polygamists in order to be received into their society.”<sup>2</sup>

The Lord simply referred to plural marriage as “the Law”:

“God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises.”<sup>3</sup>

John Taylor sustained the view that the law itself was polygamous.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, President Woodruff taught this same doctrine:

“We declare to all men that the God of heaven commanded Joseph Smith to introduce and practice the patriarchal order of marriage, including the plurality of marriage, including the plurality of wives. And why? Because it was the law given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ...”<sup>5</sup>

The Lord's words allow us no “wiggle room” or “get

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1 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 9:322.

2 Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses 4:224.

3 Doctrine and Covenants 132:34.

4 John Taylor to Malinda Merrill, 19 January 1883, John Taylor Papers.

5 Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses 23:131.

out clause” in which we can overlook, or ignore them. If the revelation means that plural marriage must continue as a practice then this can mean one of only three things:

1. God changed His mind
2. The Church leaders supersede the authority of God
3. It must have continued to the present day

Number three is the only possibility, for otherwise God would have ceased to have been God.<sup>1</sup> Some argue that the principle has remained, although the practice has ended. But we have already shown that it was the practice that Taylor was asking about, and what would be the point of God saying it would never end if he was just referring to the principle and not the practice.

After receiving the revelation, President Taylor answered the many letters asking him to give up the practice in unequivocal terms. One of his replies should suffice:

“It is very well to talk glibly about compromising and arranging for dispensing with polygamy, as they call it, but they know nothing of the tremendous consequences that would befall us as a people, or as individuals, if we should follow their suggestions, or allow sympathy, or acquiescence with their views, to have a place in our hearts.”<sup>2</sup>

## **The 1886 meeting & the 1886 revelation**

If the 1886 revelation is authentic, and is speaking about plural marriage – and this article has already shown that it is – this presents a problem for those who try to disprove the 1886 meeting that they seem to have ignored: Most arguments against the 1886 meeting are the same or similar to those against the 1886 revelation:

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1 See Alma 42 & Mormon 9.

2 2 May 1887, John Taylor to Franklin S. Richards.

1. It wasn't received / it didn't happen.
2. There isn't any contemporary journal evidence for it.
3. It was made up afterwards.
4. Even if it happened it doesn't matter.

All such arguments against the 1886 revelation have proven untrue, and have shown the LDS Church leaders and apologists who proposed them to be mistaken or dishonest. There is no contemporary diary evidence for the 1886 revelation, but no modern scholar disputes it was received on September 27th, the day of the 1886 meeting, and General Authorities and faithful LDS historians have admitted its authenticity. Yet the anti-Fundamentalists still claim that the 1886 meeting couldn't have happened because of the lack of diary evidence.

If those same journals avoid speaking of President Taylor receiving such a significant revelation, then why don't they? From this we may conclude that: 1) A lack of diary evidence – either of the revelation or meeting – is no indicator of what happened on that day. At the least it shows that – like many other important spiritual events in Gospel history – we cannot use the fact they were not written down at the time as any indicator of whether they happened or not. 2) It does raise the question of why they purposely avoided mentioning something so important, and of what else might have happened that they felt was too sacred or secret to write about (or perhaps had been told not to mention in their journals).

Having established that the 1886 revelation is authentic, and is about the law of plural marriage, then in order for the Lord's words to be true and His prophecy to come to pass, then God would have had to have ensured that this practice continued, and – considering the Church's current stance – this must be happening outside of the official auspices of the Church. Therefore something like the 1886 meeting would have had to have happened, and as Woolley's account is the only candidate for this we should consider it seriously – for our exaltation depends upon it having happened.

# Keeping Eternal Laws & Fulfilling Prophecies

## Judging the 1886 Meeting

Tens of thousands of Mormon Fundamentalists believe that in 1886, Joseph Smith came to John Taylor and instructed him to set apart a group of men to keep alive plural marriage even when the Church should reject that principle.

Just like the visitation of God to Joseph Smith, there were no visual means to record what happened, and although – like the visit of Moroni to show the gold plates – there were witnesses, they also didn't record it or share what had happened until after the event, as is the case with many of the greatest scriptural and spiritual events.

However, this does not mean that there are no indications of the truthfulness of what went on at that time. God has given us principles by which to judge the truth, history gives us precedents so we can see what is possible, and Prophets foretell the future, so that when it comes to pass we can know it is from God. Using these tools we can judge what someone claims, to see if it contradicts principle, follows precedent, and fulfills prophecy. By seeking the Spirit as we study, we can also obtain a divine confirmation.

With these standards in mind let us look into how this story of God providing a way to keep plural marriage alive meets these tests.

## Principles

### 1 – Plural Marriage

*“He then put each person under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle.”*

If Plural Marriage was just a temporary practice, without eternal consequences for not living it or celestial blessings for fulfilling it, then we could easily understand God allowing it to end. Whatever temporal benefits it might have provided and despite the difficult adjustments for some that giving it up might create, there would be no everlasting harm in letting it go.

But if it were an eternal and unchangeable law, necessary for exaltation, required for maintaining Priesthood keys, and if God had promised to keep it on the earth, then we would expect Him to ensure that it continued, despite what course others might take, or what opposition against it there might be. We might also hope that He would explain this through his prophets and the revelations He gave them.

So let us look at the scriptures on this subject and see what they have to say. In Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants we are told that:

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated – And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”<sup>1</sup>

This would seem to indicate that God determined before ever sending us to earth that certain laws would lead to definite blessings, and that – as this is irrevocably decreed – these laws would never change, and the blessings would always be available to the righteous. This conforms to what Joseph taught on this subject:

“Ordinances instituted in heaven before the foundation of this world in the Priesthood for the salvation of man, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved upon the same principles.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 130:20-21.

2 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308.

Is it possible that one such law could be plural marriage? At the beginning of Joseph Smith's 1843 revelation on the subject, the Lord tells us:

"I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.

For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world."<sup>1</sup>

Some may assume that the Lord here is only speaking about eternal monogamous marriage, but the Lord later clarifies what type of marriage he is talking about. Firstly, he states that he is now going to reveal this eternal law:

"I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was."<sup>2</sup>

He reminds us that He is the author of this law, that it is a law of the Priesthood, and that it was determined even prior to the earth's creation. And what is this law?

"God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises."<sup>3</sup>

Celestial Marriage, as the first verse we quoted tells us, comes with conditions, and the fulfillment of those promises (spoken about in the verse above) comes through keeping the

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1 D&C 132:4-5.

2 D&C 132:28.

3 D&C 132:34 (see 29-37).

commandment to live plural marriage as Abraham did. It is interesting to note that this is the only revelation to Joseph Smith that speaks of exaltation<sup>1</sup>, and that the Lord states fourteen times that this law is necessary to celestial glory.<sup>2</sup>

President John Taylor was once asked if a woman might obtain exaltation with her husband without taking additional wives, referring to these passages, this was his reply:

“You seem desirous to take part of the Law and reject the other part, but it is plainly stated as above quoted, that they were ‘to do the works of Abraham, and that if ye enter not into my Law, ye cannot receive the promise of my Father which was made unto Abraham.’ It is further said: ‘God commanded Abraham and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife, and that the reason why she did it was because it was the Law.’ It is evident therefore from the whole of the above that other wives were included in this Law as well as the one.”<sup>3</sup>

In a revelation subsequently given to John Taylor the Lord stated even more clearly:

“This law is a Celestial law and pertains to a Celestial Kingdom. ... and appertains to thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, and eternal increase in the Celestial Kingdom of God.”<sup>4</sup>

## 2 – Authority

*“John Taylor set the five mentioned apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as*

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1 D&C 132:17,19,22-23,26,29,37,39,49,57 & 63.

2 D&C 132:3,4,6,17,19,20,24,25,27,32,37,54 & 64.

3 John Taylor to Malinda Merrill, 19 January 1883.

4 Revelation to John Taylor, 25-26 June 1882, Unpublished Revelations 80:21-22.

*they remained on the earth; and while doing so, the Prophet Joseph Smith stood by directing the proceedings.”*

Most Latter-day Saints understand the basic principle that in order to perform saving ordinances it is necessary that you hold the proper Priesthood authority. However, having and exercising the proper Priesthood authority is also dependent upon living certain laws. One is not ordained before being baptized, and a person does not get set apart for a calling without keeping at least the law of chastity or tithing.

This is just as true for a deacon as it is for the prophet. As the Lord reminded Joseph, the keys he held were dependent on him fulfilling certain essential obligations:

“The keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances.”<sup>1</sup>

After Joseph received the sealing keys of Elijah in the Kirtland temple he explained that those keys were dependent upon not only receiving ordinances, but also performing them:

“The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, ...”<sup>2</sup>

Could plural marriage have been amongst the ordinances the Lord and Joseph Smith speak of? In this matter we have the words of Joseph himself, who told one of his wives,

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 64:5.

2 History of the Church 6:251, Teachings, p. 337.



“I put it [*entering plural marriage*] off and put it off till an angel with a drawn sword stood by me and told me if I did not establish that principle upon the earth, I would lose my position ...”<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo Snow related how Joseph had also told him of the same angelic warning:

“Yet the Prophet hesitated and deferred from time to time, until an angel of God stood by him with a drawn sword, and told him that unless he moved forward and established plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him ...”<sup>2</sup>

Did this only apply to Joseph Smith though or to all those who might hold the keys of the Priesthood? In this area we are not left to speculate either. “Heber [C. Kimball] was told by Joseph that if he did not do this [*take another wife*] he would lose his Apostleship.”<sup>3</sup> This requirement applied to all of the Apostles, as John Taylor recalled:

“When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others.”<sup>4</sup>

This was not a temporary test though, but an eternal principle revealed by the Lord later to John Taylor himself:

“Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the Priesthood and people of my Church: ... You may

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1 Zina Huntington, 23 December 1894, Collected Discourses, Vol. 5.

2 Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, Ch.13, p.69-70.

3 Life of Heber C. Kimball, Orson F. Whitney, p. 336 (1888 edition).

4 John Taylor, 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222.

appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to My law: For it is not meet that men who will not abide My law shall preside over My Priesthood;”<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently Seymour took another wife.<sup>2</sup> John Taylor explained why living this law was so necessary to holding and presiding over the keys of the Priesthood:

“If we do not embrace that principle soon, the keys will be turned against us. If we do not keep the same law our Heavenly Father has kept we cannot go with Him. A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law.”<sup>3</sup>

Those who do not live the law of plural marriage cannot preside over those who do, and are not worthy to hold the keys of the Priesthood at all. In fact, if they had those keys but didn’t embrace that principle, the keys would be turned against them, and “taken from them and given to others” as Joseph Smith warned they could be.

## **Precedent**

### **1 – Priesthood & Church**

*“Among many other things stated by President Taylor on this occasion was this: ‘I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the seventh president, and that there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.’”*

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1 Revelation to John Taylor, October 13th, 1882.

2 He married Abbie Corrila Wells on 28th April 1884.

3 John Taylor, October 10th, 1882, Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

The Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood were restored prior to the organization of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, baptisms were performed, revelations were received, and missionaries were sent out prior to the Church existing.<sup>2</sup> These events were not put to a vote of common consent, nor were they recorded upon any official records. God did not wait upon the Church to be organized before beginning the restoration, and Joseph wasn't prevented from being a prophet prior to there being members to sustain or reject his actions.

What about after the Church was organized – did every ordination wait upon arms raised to the square before it was valid, did every revelation wait until it was printed before being acted upon? Were there ever times when the will of the Lord and the actions of His prophet conflicted with the official rules and policies of the Church? Which took precedence and what was valid in such cases?

Perhaps the most pertinent example of one such conflict was between Church policy and divine principle on the law of plural marriage. It was first revealed by God in 1929, prior to the organization of the Church, whilst Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon<sup>3</sup>, and was again mentioned in an unpublished 1831 revelation, which was also unknown to Church members.<sup>4</sup>

Oliver Cowdery, acting in Joseph's absence, in 1835 made plural marriage against the rules and policies of the Church, in a statement on marriage accepted for publication in the Doctrine and Covenants, where it remained for decades afterwards. It declared "we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband."<sup>5</sup> It was sustained by Church members and canonized by the Church, and yet was in direct conflict with the actions of

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1 Joseph Smith – History 1:68-72.

2 See Doctrine & Covenants, Sections 2-19.

3 Brigham Young, Journal of Charles Walker, 26th July 1872. See Joseph B. Noble testimony, June 1886.

4 Revelation to Joseph Smith, 17th July 1831. See W.W. Phelps letter to Brigham Young, 12th August 1861.

5 Doctrine & Covenants 101:4 (1835 Edition).

Joseph Smith (who had not long married his first plural wife) and the revelations given by God to him.

What was Joseph to do? He had two choices – disobey God or the Church. If he believed he derived his authority to perform or enter marriages came from the Church he could not have continued to perform and practice plural marriage against its laws. Doing so could lead to his excommunication<sup>1</sup>, and – as it was also against the law in the states in which he lived<sup>2</sup> – it could also lead to his imprisonment.

It was certainly a difficult decision, one which he did not take lightly. In fact, he hesitated for several years until the Lord sent an angel with a drawn sword who told him:

“Joseph, unless you go to and immediately teach that principle and put the same in practice, *[you]* should be slain. For thus saith the Lord, that the time has now come that I will raise up seed unto me as I spoke by my servant Jacob as is recorded in the Book of Mormon<sup>3</sup>, therefore, I command my people.”<sup>4</sup>

This revelation left him in no doubt as to what the Lord’s will was. Despite the rules of the Church, he was commanded to practice plural marriage and to share that principle with his trusted allies, so that the Lord’s choicest spirit children might be raised up on earth.

The Church was a divine organization, and Joseph was the earthly head of it, but he presided over the Priesthood before he ever was sustained President of the Church, and although plural marriage was against the laws of the Church and state, the Lord revealed to him in 1843 that plural marriage was a law of the Priesthood itself:

“I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my

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1 William Clayton's Journal, 19th October 1843.

2 Illinois state bigamy law, enacted 12th February 1833.

3 Jacob 2:30.

4 Joseph Lee Robinson Journal, Fall 1841.

Father before the world was.”<sup>1</sup>

By this same authority Brigham Young carried on this law, which was only accepted officially by the Church in 1852.<sup>2</sup> However, if the Saints had wanted another man as Church President, would Brother Brigham and the other Apostles have accepted that man as his Priesthood head? President Young faced this prospect when Sidney Rigdon wanted to become the guardian of the Church, and this is what he had to say then:

“If the people want President Rigdon to lead them, they may have him. But I say unto you that the quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world. They stand next to Joseph and are the Presidency of the Church, and hold the keys and would have to ordain any man unto that appointment that should be chosen. You cannot appoint any man at our head. ... But if you want any other man to lead you, take him, and we will go our way to build up the kingdom in all the world. ... Don’t put a thread between the Priesthood and God.”<sup>3</sup>

President Young said he didn’t “care who leads the church”<sup>4</sup> because he held the keys. But if the Church had chosen someone else to lead them, it would have led to a division between the Church and Priesthood, with the Apostles going elsewhere to build up the kingdom. But this would not have been the first time it had happened in Gospel history:

“Why have they [*the Jews*] wandered so far from the path of truth and rectitude? Because they left the Priesthood and have had no guide, no leader, no means of finding out what is true and what is not true. It is said

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 132:28.

2 29th August 1852, Journal of Discourses 1:53.

3 8th August 1844, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 2:436-37.

4 History of the Church 7:230.

the Priesthood was taken from the Church, but it is not so; the church went from the priesthood, and continued to travel in the wilderness, turned from the commandments of the Lord, and instituted other ordinances.”<sup>1</sup>

If that happened in our day who would be the prophet and preside over the keys? Would it be the Church President or the head of the Priesthood? On this issue Brigham Young also gives us an important insight:

“Joseph presided over the church by the voice of the Church. Perhaps it would make some of you stumble, were I to ask you a question – Does a man's being a prophet in this Church prove that he shall be president of it? I answer, no! A man may be a prophet, seer and revelator, and it may have nothing to do with his being the president of the Church. Suffice it to say that Joseph was the president of the Church, as long as he lived. The people chose to have it so. He always filled that responsible station, by the voice of the people. Can you find any revelation appointing him the president of the Church? The keys of the priesthood were committed to Joseph, to build up the Kingdom of God on the earth, and were not to be taken from him in time or in eternity; but when he was called to preside over the Church, it was by the voice of the people; though he held the keys of the priesthood independent of their voice.”<sup>2</sup>

So the people chose to have Joseph as Church President, but he held the keys independently, whether or not the Church members wanted it that way. Fortunately for them they did sustain Joseph and later Brigham, because if they had not done so they would have only separated themselves from the authority and revelation necessary for their exaltation.

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1 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 12:69.

2 Brigham Young, Contributor 10:3, Journal of Discourses 11:333.

## 2 – Higher Quorums & Ordinations

*“After that he talked for about an hour and then sat down and wrote the revelation which was given him by the Lord upon the question of Plural Marriage. Then he talked to us for some time, and said, “Some of you will be handled and ostracized and cast out from the Church by your brethren because of your faithfulness and integrity to this principle, and some of you may have to surrender your lives because of the same, but woe, woe, unto those who shall bring these troubles upon you.”*

We learn from the Joseph Smith Translation of Exodus that Moses originally offered the fullness of the Gospel to the Israelites, but upon finding them to have departed so far from the Lord’s laws when he returned from the mount, this offer was revoked and a lesser law put in its place. Thus the Lord informed them:

“I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst ...”<sup>1</sup>

Thus the higher Priesthood ordinances were not available to them, yet they continued to function – albeit in a lesser capacity – as the Lord’s Church and people, whilst a few carried on living the Gospel fully, such as the 70 elders of Israel, who did go to the mount and there saw God. However, the majority of the people either did not want or did not qualify for those blessings:

“Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was

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<sup>1</sup> JST Exodus 34:1.

kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also.”<sup>1</sup>

The “holy order” the Lord took away from the children of Israel existed in the days of Alma as can be seen from the thirteenth chapter of the book of his name:

“Now they were ordained after this manner – being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end ... and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God ...”<sup>2</sup>

We are generally only acquainted with two degrees of the Melchizedek Priesthood – the Aaronic (or Levitical Priesthood) and the general Melchizedek Priesthood offices available in the Church. But at the beginning of this dispensation it was prophesied by Moroni that a higher degree of Priesthood would be restored:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

In partial fulfillment of this – the keys of this Priesthood were restored in April 1836 (it is worth noting that this was the year after the ordination of the Quorum of Twelve and the formation of the First Presidency):

“After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 84:23-25.

2 Alma 13:8-11.

3 Doctrine & Covenants 2:1; Joseph Smith – History 1:38.



taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi – testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come ... Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.”<sup>1</sup>

That the Kirtland Temple did not complete the process of this higher Priesthood being fully restored can be seen from a revelation to Joseph Smith in 1841 in which he was commanded to:

“Build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein. For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.”<sup>2</sup>

As we quoted earlier, Joseph made it clear that this “fulness of the Priesthood” was obtained through the keys and ordinances restored by Elijah:

“The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

Those holding the fullness of this Priesthood are called “Kings and Priests” in the scriptures.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Smith calls this the “last law”<sup>5</sup> and set out the requirements for obtaining it:

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 110:13-14.

2 Doctrine & Covenants 124:27-28.

3 History of the Church 6:251

4 Revelations 5:10; Doctrine & Covenants 76:56.

5 History of the Church 5:554-556.

“If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet taught that it was the highest of the “three grand orders of Priesthood.”<sup>2</sup> It was not an optional blessing that some might experience, but a requirement for exaltation, as he told the Saints, “you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, ...”<sup>3</sup>

In 1842 he began giving the initiatory ordinances of this Priesthood to a faithful few, and in doing so set apart an ancient Priesthood Council:

“I spent the day ... instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, ... and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, ... by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn ... In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.”<sup>4</sup>

After this higher Church of the Firstborn was restored, Joseph finally felt that he could entrust a few men with a knowledge of the principle of celestial plural marriage, but doing so did not come without suspicion and opposition, as the Prophet’s scribe recorded:

“Conversed with Heber C. Kimball concerning a plot that is being laid to entrap the brethren of the secret priesthood by Bro. H. and others.”<sup>5</sup>

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308.

2 History of the Church 5:554-556.

3 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 346.

4 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 237.

5 William Clayton diary, 23 May 1843, George D. Smith, *An Intimate*

However, this secret Priesthood continued, despite such plots and betrayals, and in the Autumn of 1843, the ordinance and ordination required for the fullness of the Priesthood and admittance into its holy order were given in full, as Joseph Smith's diary records:

“Baurak Ale [code name for Joseph<sup>1</sup>] was by common consent, and unanimous voice, chosen president of the quorum, and anointed and ordained to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood (and companion).”<sup>2</sup>

The History of the Church records this as: “By the common consent and unanimous voice of the council, I was chosen president of the special council.”<sup>3</sup> It was amongst men ordained to this order, that higher doctrines were taught and plural marriages performed, outside of the auspices of the Church, and the knowledge of the majority of its members.

A couple of months earlier, as he was anticipating being made head of a higher Priesthood organization, Joseph felt as if he could leave the running of the Church in the capable hands of his brother Hyrum, said He, “Hyrum should be the prophet;” but the Church History adds, he “did not tell them he was going to be a Priest now, or a King by and by;”<sup>4</sup> referring to the higher organization he was involved in. The Saints did not take this news well, however, as they did not fully understand that he was talking about higher Priesthood and offices. He recalled in his journal that:

“Last Monday morning, certain men came to me and said, 'Brother Joseph, Hyrum is no Prophet – he can't lead the Church. If you resign, all things will go wrong; you must not resign; if you do, the Church will be

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Chronicle; The Journals of William Clayton, p. 105.

1 Doctrine & Covenants 103:22 (Pre-1981 editions)

2 Joseph Smith, Diary, 28 Sept. 1843, LDS Church Archives.

3 History of the Church 6:39.

4 History of the Church 5:512.

scattered.’ I felt curious and said, “Have you not learned the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, which includes both Prophets, Priests, and Kings?”<sup>1</sup>

Upon Joseph’s death, Brigham Young even considered keeping alive this Priesthood more important than the lives of the Twelve Apostles being taken:

“I know there are those in our midst who will seek the lives of the Twelve as they did the lives of Joseph and Hyrum. We shall ordain others and give the fullness of the priesthood, so that if we are killed the fullness of the priesthood may remain.”<sup>2</sup>

Even though these were ordinations sometimes outside of the Quorum of Twelve and without public knowledge, he was determined at all costs that the Fullness of the Priesthood should remain upon the earth. It was under its authority that celestial plural marriages and the ordinances of the temple were carried out, and by 1852 – when plural marriage was officially accepted by the Church – this higher Priesthood and the Church were able to act in harmony in keeping these laws alive.

However, by 1886 it had become apparent that much of the Church would no longer sustain higher laws, nor were worthy of higher Priesthood, and so – as Joseph did in 1843 – John Taylor set men apart as he had been to keep these laws alive, so that when it was again against the choices and policies of the Church, the authority would continue – in secret if necessary – as it had before 1852.

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 318

2 Brigham Young, History of the Church 7:230.

## Prophecy

### 1 – Plural Marriage Would Not End / Would Continue

*“He then set us apart and placed us under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage. We were given authority to ordain others if necessary to carry this work on, they in turn to be given authority to ordain others when necessary, under the direction of the worthy senior (by ordination), so that there should be no cessation in the work.”*

If plural marriage was merely a temporary practice, then we might expect God to say so either at its beginning or end. If it was a harmless tradition that didn't lead to conflict with the world then we might understand the Lord not saying anything about it. But the Lord, as we have already seen, declared it an eternal law, and essential to exaltation. In light of this, what did the Lord's prophets have to say about how long it would continue, or if it could ever end?

Joseph Smith: “It is an eternal principle, and was given by way of commandment and not by way of instruction.”<sup>1</sup>

Brigham Young: “For so God help us, we will never give up that holy law that noble prophets laid down their lives to maintain. ... The powers of hell will do their utmost to get this people to give up that holy law which God designs to maintain.”<sup>2</sup>

John Taylor: “It is an eternal part of our religion, and we will never relinquish it – We cannot withdraw or

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1 Contributor 5:259; History of the Church 6:280; Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith p. 94.

2 Life of Mosiah Hancock p. 48. See Journal of Discourses 9:36.

renounce it – He has promised to maintain it.”<sup>1</sup>

Wilford Woodruff: “We wont quit practicing plural marriage until Christ shall come.” “The Lord will never give a revelation to abandon Plural Marriage.”<sup>2</sup>

Lorenzo Snow: “Though I go to prison, God will not change His law of celestial marriage.”<sup>3</sup>

Joseph F. Smith: “There are, however, enough witnesses to these principles to establish them upon the earth in such a manner that they never can be forgotten or stamped out. For they will live; ... they are bound to prevail, because they are true principles.”<sup>4</sup>

The test of a true prophet is whether their prophecies are fulfilled. If plural marriage has continued then we can place confidence in their callings and words, but if not then we “lay the axe to the root of the tree” that we as Latter-day Saints reside on the branches of. Perhaps some might argue that they couldn’t have anticipated what was going to happen. Would they say the same of our Heavenly Father? Did He expect plural marriage to end in 1890, or to continue to our day? In 1886, He gave a revelation to John Taylor which left us in no doubt as to what His will was:

“Thus saith the Lord ... I have not revoked this law nor will I for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so, Amen.”<sup>5</sup>

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1 Millennial Star 47:708, 9 November 1855. See Journal of Discourses 23:240-41 & 26:151-53.

2 John Henry Smith Journal, see Heber J. Grant Journal, 17 May 1888 & Minutes of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 12 December 1888.

3 Millennial Star 48:110-11; History of Utah, Orson F. Whitney, 1879.

4 Journal of Discourses 21:10, 7 December 1879.

5 27 September 1886, Revelation to John Taylor, Church History Office; Unpublished Revelations 88:1, 9.

With these words, the Lord promised that he would never revoke (end, repeal, or withdraw) the law of celestial plural marriage. John Taylor was in hiding because of the persecution that arose due to this law, and God left him and us in no uncertainty of His intention to keep this law alive, and never remove it.

## 2 – Another People

*“President Taylor said that the time would come when many of the Saints would apostatize because of this principle. He said, ‘one-half of this people will apostatize over the principle for which we are now in hiding, yea, and possibly one-half of the other half’ (rising off the floor while making the statement). He also said the day will come when a document similar to that (Manifesto) then under consideration would be adopted by the Church, following which ‘apostasy and whoredom would be rampant in the Church.’”*

Did God change His mind? Was He taken by surprise? Or did He anticipate what might happen and let His servants know what they should do in such a situation? Did God’s prophets also warn about the results of the Church giving up the principle? Did they ever imagine it could ever do so? Did they ever inform the Saints what they should do in such a situation? Or how the Lord would accomplish His plans without the involvement of the Church?

From the beginning of this dispensation the Lord has warned that He would be willing to bypass the majority of the Saints and select a few willing to keep His laws, if the rest would not honor them. As Joseph Smith warned -

“His word will go forth in these last days, in purity; for if Zion will not purify herself, so as to be approved of in all things in His sight, He will seek another people ...”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 18.

As we have quoted earlier, the Elders of the Church (General Authorities) were cautioned after plural marriage was revealed to them that “if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others.”<sup>1</sup> In John Taylor’s day the same warning was repeated to the Apostles that:

“If we do not embrace that principle soon, the keys will be turned against us.”<sup>2</sup>

This did not mean, however, that the Lord would abandon those Saints who would be faithful, or that he would remove His Priesthood authority entirely. As Brigham Young promised:

“The Lord Almighty will not suffer His Priesthood to be again driven from the earth, even should He permit the wicked to kill and destroy this people... God will preserve a portion of this people, of the meek and the humble, to bear off the kingdom to the inhabitants of the earth, and will defend His priesthood, for it is the last time, the last gathering time.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus we see that the Lord would not allow a complete apostasy in this dispensation, but would rather preserve a portion of His people with the priesthood necessary to carry out His purposes. However, the Saints prior to the Manifesto cannot claim ignorance of the results of the majority of them not living plural marriage and many of them fighting against it. They were told in no uncertain terms what the result of their actions would be. As an official Church publication warned them five years prior to the Manifesto:

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1 John Taylor, 7 June 1866, *Journal of Discourses* 11:221-222.

2 John Taylor, 10 October 1882, *Life of Wilford Woodruff*, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

3 Brigham Young, *Contributor* 10:362. see Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses* 6:125.



“The entire Church and all of its Priesthood, with the Presidency at the head of it might motion and vote against this principle until doomsday with just one effect, (namely) to vote themselves away from the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from the possession of their Priesthood, and to find themselves very speedily outside the Church and Kingdom of God; while He would raise up others that would honor and observe His law.”<sup>1</sup>

These warnings were not only to the general membership but also to any leaders who would not live and perpetuate this law. Yet the First Presidency officially and publicly admitted that this is what the membership of the Church and some of its leaders chose to do:

“We formerly taught to our people that polygamy, or celestial marriage as commanded by God through Joseph Smith, was right; that it was a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come. That doctrine was publicly promulgated by our President, the late Brigham Young, forty years ago, and was steadily taught and impressed upon the Latter-day Saints up to a short time before September, 1890.

To be at peace with the government and in harmony with their fellow citizens who are not of their faith, and to share in the confidence of the Government and the people, our people have voluntarily put aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle.”<sup>2</sup>

However, others kept this law alive, including many of the leaders of the Church from Wilford Woodruff to Joseph F.

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1 Deseret News, Editorial, 1 April 1885.

2 Petition for Amnesty, First Presidency, 19 December 1891, Contributor 13:197.

Smith.<sup>1</sup> But the Lord set apart others to carry on His laws, so that the actions of subsequent Church Presidents could not stop this principle or its practice, as John Taylor promises:

“If God has introduced something for our glory and exaltation, we are not going to have that kicked over by an improper influence, either inside or outside of the Church of the living God. ...”<sup>2</sup>

As we illustrated earlier, this is not a new situation. It happened in the days of Moses, when the majority preferred a lesser law (even though it was not capable of exalting them), whilst the few who were willing to do all the Lord asked of them carried on regardless:

“The kingdom of God is to be enjoyed by the Saints - those who are righteous, not those who are wicked. If we prove unworthy, Zion will have to be redeemed by our children, who may be more worthy, while we may be kept, like the ancient children of Israel, wandering in the wilderness, enduring hardships, persecution and trials, until we shall have suffered the penalty of neglected, not to say broken and unfulfilled covenants.”<sup>3</sup>

Yet, in the end, it is those who live the laws of God who will be exalted, and God has made a way for them to be lived, despite the actions of the Church and nation. Those who still wander about in the wilderness may yet emerge to fulfill their covenants and become part of the Lord’s higher purposes, but whatever their course; this principle, God’s priesthood, and those people who honor them will continue to fulfill the prophecies given by Him and receive the promises made to them.

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1 See Solemn Covenant, B. Carmon Hardy; Post-Manifesto Plural Marriages, D. Michael Quinn; or Mormon Polygamy, Richard S. VanWagoner for extensive documentation.

2 John Taylor, 7 June 1874, Journal of Discourses 25:310.

3 Joseph F. Smith, 2 April 1877, Journal of Discourses 19:26.

## *Summary -*

We have established that:

- Celestial plural marriage is an eternal principle and practice.
- Holding the Priesthood keys is dependent upon living this law.
- There is higher priesthood that can act separately from the Church.
- God and His prophets prophesied that this law would never end.
- God intended to set apart “another people” if the Church rejected it.

The question now remains – how do we respond to these truths? Do we trust the words of God and of the early prophets? Do we believe their prophecies are being fulfilled by those set apart to keep these principles alive? Will we ignore what God expects of us, or will we sustain God in His plans and seek to further them?

## **Spiritual Confirmation**

*While examining the last window, and feeling greatly agitated, a voice spoke to me, saying, “Can't you feel the Spirit? Why should you worry?”*

We may be wondering why we have not understood these things before. Perhaps this study has opened up for us possibilities we have never seen if we had not looked more deeply. Prior to reading these things our preconceptions may have kept us from accepting that God might have worked in this way. Now we can consider these principles with a more open mind and willing heart, that the Lord can work with more easily.

When Lorin Woolley was checking the outside window

of President John Taylor's room to see if someone had forced entry, the Spirit whispered to him, "Can't you feel the Spirit? Why should you worry?" Many have felt that same Spirit reading his account of how the Savior came to Taylor, giving him a revelation stating "I have not revoked this law [*of plural marriage*], nor will I," and they have gained a spiritual witness for themselves that Joseph Smith oversaw Taylor ordaining several men so that "no year would pass by without children being born into this principle."

We may never have physical evidence in this life of Moses parting the Red Sea, of the Savior appearing to the brother of Jared, or of Elijah coming to the Kirtland Temple, but we can have a spiritual witness of these events. Through personal revelation we can know for ourselves if they happened, that God provided a way to keep alive his authority, and to live all of his laws.

## The Last Prophecies of John Taylor

“I have saved my servant John Taylor for a wise purpose in me,”<sup>1</sup> revealed the Lord to Wilford Woodruff in 1880. Yet most of that decade the Church President spent his days in hiding from the government that was imprisoning those Latter-day Saints who lived the principle of Celestial Plural Marriage, and his life during that time remains a mystery to most Church members, who were unaware of the great purpose he was to fulfill. During his stay in the home of John W. Woolley in Centerville, Utah, he was visited by the resurrected Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith, who instructed him how to ensure that the Priesthood of God and its highest ordinances continued, no matter what persecution may come and notwithstanding the direction others Latter-day Saints might take. He called together his most faithful associates and laid this great responsibility upon them, with all the authority they would require to carry out God’s work. After which, he foretold the future of those who had received this commission and those who would yet fulfill it, as well as the Church and the course it would take.<sup>2</sup>

### Prophecy One

The Saints had been warned repeatedly that their enemies wanted them to give up the law of Patriarchal Marriage, as President Charles Penrose told them, “What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of ‘Mormonism’...? Simply to renounce, abrogate or apostatize from the new and everlasting covenant of

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1 Revelation to Wilford Woodruff, 26 January 1880, Unpublished Revelations 79:75.

2 27 September 1886, John W. Woolley Home, Centerville, Utah. As related by Lorin C. Woolley. (Woolley’s 1929 affidavit serves as the primary source for the text of these prophecies (which appear in bold throughout). As this article illustrates, the prophecies were often repeated later by Apostles, and their fulfillment also serves to substantiate their authenticity.)

marriage in its fullness.”<sup>1</sup> However, the Gentile world was but a puppet for a more malevolent power: Satan himself, who personally was on a campaign to have the Church members relinquish their “most holy principle”<sup>2</sup>. As Brigham foresaw, “the powers of hell will do their utmost to get this people to give up that holy law which God designs to maintain.”<sup>3</sup>

However, President Taylor’s actions ensured that there would always be a group of righteous Latter-day Saints maintaining this principle, so that the Devil would be ultimately thwarted in his plans. Yet, he also foresaw that the majority of Saints would seek an easier road, even if it meant a lesser glory, as he prophesied, **“one half of this people will apostatize over the principle for which we are now in hiding, yea, and possibly one half of the other half.”**<sup>4</sup> Sadly, this regrettable outcome was the only prophesy he would see fulfilled prior to his death.

On the last day of June 1887, a constitutional convention was held, the Gentiles having declined to participate, Mormon delegates from all the counties in the territory formulated a provision “prohibiting polygamy and making it a crime, with a severe penalty.” According to the Church’s own newspaper just over a month later, on the first day of August (less than a week after the death of President Taylor), an election was held in which “95 percent (13,000) of all the Mormon voters in the territory voted for the ratification of this convention.”<sup>5</sup>

Why did they do it? Why did they replace a law of God with a law to make it a crime? The First Presidency themselves summed it up thus, “To be at peace with the government and in harmony with their fellow citizens who are not of their faith, and to share in the confidence of the government and the people, our people have voluntarily put

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1 Deseret News, 23 April 1885 (1:377).

2 Recollection of William Clayton (Joseph Smith’s secretary), Historical Record 6:225-7.

3 Mosiah Hancock Journal, Spring 1863.

4 Woolley affidavit.

5 Deseret News, Aug. 30, 1890

aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle,”<sup>1</sup>

There was undoubtedly relief amongst the monogamous Mormons that they would no longer have to suffer because of their polygamous leaders and those few members that kept the practice, however, faithful Saints - such as Elder Kimball lamented that “...if there is any one thing that some people are glad and happy is done away with, it is that principle.”<sup>2</sup> Of course, one wonders if such people will be as happy in the eternities having given up an essential requirement for their exaltation, for as Brother Brigham stated, “The only men who become Gods, even sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.”<sup>3</sup>

The Saints today are largely of the same attitude towards Celestial (plural) Marriage as most were just before the Manifesto, if not more so, as Professor David Bitton suggests, “Today probably no modern people is more anti-polygamy than the orthodox Mormons.”<sup>4</sup> This was further shown by an opinion poll, on whether people should be allowed to live polygamously, in which it was found that, “...the greatest opposition to polygamy [was] among Mormons - 64.5 percent.”<sup>5</sup> Not content with rejected the lifestyle themselves, it seems that the majority of members would not want any one else to have that choice either.

## Prophecy Two

Such choices are not without consequence, however, and where a law of God is rejected by the majority of Church members, they cannot hope to receive the blessings attached to living such a law, and they allow the adversary to have greater influence over their lives. One aspect of the law of Plural

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1 19 December 1891, First Presidency Petition for Amnesty, Contributor 13:197; Smoot Investigation 1:18.

2 Deseret News, Mar. 1, 1902.

3 Journal of Discourses 11:268-9.

4 Journal of Mormon History 4:101, 1977.

5 Provo Daily Herald, 29 May 1977, p. 23.

Marriage was that it minimized the temptation to commit adultery, offered to every woman the chance to marry, to have a greater degree of freedom to women (who shared responsibilities with their ‘sister-wives’), and therefore eliminated many of the causes of children being born out of wedlock.

The outcome of relinquishing such a responsibility for a more worldly system of marriage has led to more worldly problems being prevalent amongst the Saints. This outcome was anticipated by President Taylor who warned, **“the day will come when a document similar to that (Manifesto) then under consideration would be adopted by the Church, following which ‘apostasy and whoredom would be rampant in the Church.’”**<sup>1</sup> Another Church President, almost a hundred years later would state, in fulfillment of President Taylor’s words, “the sin of adultery is running rampant through the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Sadly such problems began almost immediately after the turn of the century, as a son of President Heber C. Kimball related, “I remember very accurately what my father told this people in the old Bowery. Said he, ‘You men and you women that lift up your voices against that holy principle (plural marriage) that has been introduced among this people, the time will come when your daughters will run these streets as common harlots, and you can’t help yourselves.’ I think some have been guilty of lifting up their voices, and if there is any one thing that some people are glad and happy it is done away with, it is that principle. I remember hearing another statement my father made: ‘When you stand on the street corners of this great city and you cannot tell a Mormon from a Gentile, then look out for trouble.’ Well, it has come. The trouble has not come to us in the way of tornadoes, or cyclones; but it has come to us and to our sons and daughters in the way of temptations.”<sup>3</sup> Elder Matthias F. Cowley, also sadly admitted, “I want to say that that prediction, sorrowful though it may

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1 Woolley affidavit.

2 Harold B. Lee, Ensign 4:7:101.

3 Conference Report, Oct. 1901, p. 32.



seem, has had its fulfillment.”<sup>1</sup>

That such an attitude towards the principle as a great number of Saints had at the time constitutes their apostasy from the Gospel, is clear from the observation of President Heber C. Kimball, who lamented, “Many of this people have broken their covenants by finding fault with the Plurality of Wives and trying to sink it out of existence.”<sup>2</sup> In failing to defend their rights or uphold the right of the faithful who lived a higher law, such members were not only pleasing the government, but also the more malevolent power which inspired the persecution against the elect of God. In answer to the question of President Penrose of, “What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of ‘Mormonism’, more properly termed the Gospel of the Son of God? Simply to renounce, abrogate or apostatize from the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in its fullness.”<sup>3</sup>

### Prophecy Three

The Lord made provision though, that His sacred law would continue amongst those worthy to live it, that their children would be born in that holy covenant of Celestial (plural) Marriage, and that the authority would remain upon the earth until the return of Christ. He, Himself, said “I have not revoked this law, nor will I!”<sup>4</sup>, and that the principle was to continue, is a truth all of the prophets from Brigham Young to Joseph F. Smith prophesied of:

“For so God help us, we will never give up that holy law that noble prophets laid down their lives to maintain.” *Brigham Young*<sup>5</sup>

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1 Des. News, August 9, 1902.

2 Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses 4:108.

3 Charles W. Penrose, Deseret Evening News, April 23rd, 1885.

4 Revelation to John Taylor, 26 September 1886, Unpublished Revelations 88:9.

5 Brigham Young, Life of Mosiah Hancock p. 48.

“It is an eternal part of our religion, and we will never relinquish it - We cannot withdraw or renounce it - He has promised to maintain it.” *John Taylor*<sup>1</sup>

“We wont quit practicing Plural Marriage until Christ shall come.” *Wilford Woodruff*<sup>2</sup>

“Though I go to prison, God will not change His law of Celestial Marriage.” *Lorenzo Snow*<sup>3</sup>

“There are, however, enough witnesses to these principles to establish them upon the earth in such a manner that they never can be forgotten or stamped out. For they will live;...they are bound to prevail, because they are true principles.” *Joseph F. Smith*<sup>4</sup>

John Taylor began both the means through which those prophecies would be fulfilled, and also made a further prophesy at that momentous time, as Lorin Woolley, a witness relates, “He then set apart and placed us under covenant that while we lived **we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of Plural Marriage**. We were given authority to ordain others if necessary to carry this work on, they in turn to be given authority to ordain others when necessary, under the direction of the worthy senior (by ordination), so that there should be no cessation in the work.”<sup>5</sup>

Apostle Marriner W. Merrill, who would have surely come to know of the covenant those faithful brethren made, repeated President Taylor’s words to a group of Saints just before the the new century. Said he, “...the time would never

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1 John Taylor, *Millennial Star* 47:708, 9 November 1855.

2 Wilford Woodruff, *John Henry Smith Journal*, see Heber J. Grant *Journal*, 17 May 1888.

3 Lorenzo Snow, *History of Utah*, Orson F. Whitney, 1879.

4 Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses* 21:10, 7 December 1879.

5 Woolley affidavit, see fn. 2.

come when children of polygamous parents would cease to be born in the Church.”<sup>1</sup> A year later, another Apostle, the son of Wilford Woodruff in fact, made a similar statement, and ensured his listeners knew it was a prophesy, “...no year will ever pass, whether it be in this country [Mexico], in India, or wherever, from now until the coming of the Savior, when children will not be born in Plural Marriage. And I make this prophecy in the name of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

It is also related that Presidents B.H. Roberts and Joseph F. Smith<sup>3</sup> made similar remarks, and we know from those men who in this century have received the same commission and authority John Taylor originally imparted have also made the same covenant<sup>4</sup>, and that to the present day no year has gone by without a child being born into families living plural marriage.

## Prophecy Four

President Taylor foresaw that the Church would undergo a mighty change - not just of emphasis - but of altering principles, ordinances, and teachings in order for the Church's beliefs and practices to be less offensive to the world. There was a time when friendship with the world was looked upon as undesirable<sup>5</sup>, for as James taught, “friendship of the world is enmity with God”<sup>6</sup>. Whereas when Brother Heber J. Grant took the reins of Church leadership he seemed to see securing a good relationship with the world as a lofty

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1 Rudger Clawson Diary, 11 July 1899.

2 Abraham O. Woodruff, Quarterly Conference in Colonia Juarez, 18-19 November 1900, recorded by Joseph Charles Bentley (clerk), Journal and Notes p. 61.

3 Interview with Douglas M. Todd, Sr., 28 November 1969.

4 “I was instructed to see that never a year passed that children were not born in the covenant of plural marriage.” *Joseph W. Musser (autobiography)*, 14 May 1929.

5 “There is nothing that would soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them.” *Brigham Young*, 8 April 1862, *Journal of Discourses* 10:32 (see 4:38)

6 James 4:4; see John 15:18.

goal to be sought after. Said he, “My greatest happiness I find in the goodwill and friendship that has developed among all classes of people at home and abroad toward the LDS church during my lifetime. In place of early-day persecution and bitterness we now enjoy high regard and happy associations with all denominations.”<sup>1</sup> He was undoubtedly eager to avoid the persecution which plagued the Church in the previous century, just as the general membership was all too eager to jettison those elements which left them too peculiar to have entered the American mainstream. The cost of such a move was a great one, however, as John Taylor prophesied, **“in the time of the seventh President of this Church, the Church would go into bondage both temporally and spiritually.”**<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, Heber C. Kimball related to Amanda H. Wilcox in May 1868 that, “A spirit of speculation and extravagance will take possession of the Saints, and the result will be financial bondage.” Orson Pratt similarly warned that, “This people, at some future time – may possibly be in bondage greater than they are at the present time.”<sup>3</sup>

Before the death of Joseph F. Smith, he had striven to free the Church from debt and succeeded. His financial prudence meant that the Church need no longer be reliant upon the world for its support, nor be beholden to business to which it was indebted. However, Heber J. Grant, who was a banking man used to the ways of the world as they related to business found occasion to put church property back into the hands of the creditors. In 1923 he took out a \$30 million loan to put the Utah and Idaho sugar company back on its feet. As collateral he mortgaged Temple Square (including the temple), and the Bishop’s Storehouse. During the time the temple was mortgaged (for fifty years) it belonged in the hands of the gentile bankers, not to the Saints, and so the Lord’s house was not wholly in the possession of His people for quite some time.

This was only the beginning of the indebtedness of the

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1 Heber J. Grant, Salt Lake Tribune, 22 November 1938.

2 Woolley affidavit, see fn. 2.

3 7 February 1875, Journal of Discourses 17:305.

Church to the world, which has had much of its money held in the stocks and shares of non-Mormon businesses. The Mormon people too have succumbed to being in such bondage: having their money in gentile banks, working for gentile employers, buying from gentile stores, being insured by gentiles, and voting for gentile political parties. Yet the Church is better organized and in a better position financially to end such dependency upon the world than it has ever been, although it is less inclined to do so than at any other point in its history.

### **“Spiritual Bondage”**

When God’s people follow after the fashions and traditions of the world, they fail to live up to His expectations for them, and indicate by their actions and attitudes that they do not wish to believe all of the doctrines of the Gospel or live all of God’s laws, then they are indeed under ‘spiritual bondage’.

The ancient Israelites, through their choices and their lack of worthiness, had the higher law and its blessings taken away from them, whilst only a small group maintained the Gospel in it’s fullness. So too at least one General Authority in this dispensation warned that the same could happen to the modern Church: “If all Israel will not be sanctified by the law which their Moses first offers them, they will peradventure receive a law of ordinances administered to them, not according to the power of an endless life.”<sup>1</sup>

The Saints had indeed rejected one of the highest laws of God by not entering into Celestial Plural Marriage, and making it known that they wished the Church to end the practice. As Joseph F. Smith stated at the dedication of the Salt Lake temple, “The reason the Manifesto was given and the principle laid aside was that many of those who entered into that principle were not keeping the commandments, and that not over two percent of the Latter-day Saints ever entered into

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1 Franklin D. Richards, J.D. 1: 321.

that principle”, or simply “because the Saints rejected it.”<sup>1</sup>

Satan – who we learn from the temple endowment ceremony controls the governments of the world - had gone to war with the Saints, in a war which was prophesied in the book of Daniel<sup>2</sup>. The Lord revealed to Wilford Woodruff, whilst an Apostle, that this prophesy applied to our day, “The Devil is ruling over his kingdom and my Spirit has no place in the hearts of the rulers of this nation, and the Devil stirs them up to defy my power and make war upon the Saints.”<sup>3</sup> On the eve of 1890, President Woodruff realized that the prophesy of war was “beginning to be fulfilled, that the whole nation would turn against Zion and make war upon the Saints.”<sup>4</sup> Thousands of years previously the prophets had predicted the outcome of the battle the Church then faced: They would lose! As John the Beloved recorded, “it was given unto him (the beast) to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them.”<sup>5</sup> The Saints need not have lost the fight though, for even as late as the year before the Manifesto, the Lord revealed, “If the Saints will hearken unto My voice ... the wicked shall not prevail.” Of course the opposite was also true, “inasmuch as they ... hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world, shall prevail against them.”<sup>6</sup> Which is, sadly, what happened.

If God’s people as a majority had followed Him, there would have been no Manifesto, nor the resultant ‘spiritual bondage’ which John Taylor predicted would follow their actions. As the Apostle Matthias F. Cowley told the Saints at the beginning of this century: “I wish to remind you of a certain revelation given you through President Taylor\*. The command was given to set our quorums and houses in order, and the promise was that if we should obey the command God would fight our battles for us; but we did not obey the

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1 John Mills Whitaker Journal, April 1893, W. H. Smart Diary, 1901-1902 Bk; p. 94; 28 July 1901.

2 Daniel 7:21.

3 25 January 1880, Unpublished Revelations 79:10.

4 Wilford Woodruff Journal, 31 December 1889.

5 Revelations 13:7.

6 D&C 103:8.

command and revelation given through President Taylor, [for if we did] there would have been no Manifesto.”<sup>1</sup>

The bondage God’s people are in both temporarily and spiritually has increased over the years, as is evidenced by the declining moral standards, in the way the Gospel has been simplified, and that the Church has made efforts to stop teaching and practicing many of the principles the world and other Christian churches find offensive. However, the Lord will not allow such a situation to go on indefinitely.

## **Prophecy Five**

This being the last dispensation the Lord has restored the Gospel, with all its features and functions, never to be taken away again from the earth. As we have seen, however, this does not mean that the Church is obliged to promote laws the majority of members don’t want to live or are unworthy of, or doctrines they don’t understand or accept. The responsibility to keep such beliefs and ordinances alive still remains though, and there must be a group with sufficient authority, and at least a few worthy enough to see to it that His work in such areas is still carried on. This is in line with precedent and in fulfillment of prophecy.

What of those who keep such commandments alive? Who make the personal sacrifice of living God’s laws in opposition to the world, what are the Saints to make of such men and women the Lord has called to that work? Sadly, the majority of them – no longer being familiar with the principles they uphold, nor being aware of the Lord’s approval of their actions – would be more likely to condemn those Mormons who maintain Mormonism as Joseph and Brigham taught and lived it. Even many of the modern Authorities, whose time is taken up with dealing with the problems amongst members throughout the world, are very often unaware that a higher

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1 Matthias F. Cowley, January 28th, 1901, Smoot Hearing 1:8.

\*Revelation to John Taylor, 25 December 1884; Unpublished Revelations 87:5-8, also Revelation to John Taylor, 13 October 1882; Unpublished Revelations 83:20-25.

Priesthood organization exists and operates, that was set up under the direction of a prophet and President of the Church. This has led to misunderstandings, even to persecution and excommunication. Just as Brother John Taylor foresaw: **“Some of you will be handled and ostracized and cast out from the Church by your brethren because of your faithfulness and integrity to this principle, and some of you may have to surrender your lives because of the same, but woe, woe, unto those who shall bring these troubles upon you.”**<sup>1</sup>

The idea of righteous Saints being cast out of the Church is nothing new. Alma came upon members in his day who had been cast out of the synagogues<sup>2</sup>, and Jesus also warned that it was a prospect that the righteous might face<sup>3</sup>. Joseph once lamented how a man was tried for his membership because of his personal beliefs<sup>4</sup>, and an Apostle decades later wrote in a Church magazine how sad it was that sometime people were excommunicated, when they shouldn't have been, and how the Spirit remains with such people<sup>5</sup>. Some have incorrectly supposed that having a person's name removed from the records of the Church also removes any Priesthood that they held, but the Priesthood is only removed

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1 Woolley affidavit, see fn. 2.

2 Alma 32:2-3.

3 Matthew 10:17, see John 9:22,12:42.

4 “I did not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodists, and not like the Latter-Day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their Church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine.” (*Joseph Smith, History of the Church* 5:340)

5 “Persons sometimes say that they have enjoyed the spirit of the work as much since they were cut off as while they were in the Church. Have they enjoyed the Spirit? Yes. Why? Simply because they were wrongfully cut off. They were cut off in a way that it did not take the Spirit of the God from them. And the reason why they were cut off was because they didn't come to the particular standard of perfection of those who dealt with them, or they did not come up to their feelings.” (*Millennial Star* 24:9)



by personal unworthiness and not by Church courts, as John Taylor and Joseph F. Smith plainly taught<sup>1</sup>.

Such action could not take place, however, without some leaders approving or at least overlooking the injustice. Most members have become unaware of the strange past of the Church, and look upon those who keep alive the ‘old’ ways as even stranger. As the traditions and teachings of ‘the world’ have gained greater acceptance amongst members, so too has intolerance of those lifestyles and ideas which seem to starkly conflict with the “American way” of life. Even many leading men within the Church have not been immune to such influences, and some have even been involved in the persecution of those men and women who live those laws the Church once promoted. Joseph warned that this would one day be the case, when he confided to a friend that, “You will live to see men arise in power in the Church who will seek to put down your friends and the friends of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Many will be hoisted because of their money and worldly learning which they seem to be in possession of; and many who are the true followers of our Lord and Savior will be cast down.”<sup>2</sup>

The Lord does not give any commandment though without providing a way that the faithful might keep it. So too, unpopularity, excommunication, and even martyrdom has not stopped a group of Saints from ensuring that no year has passed without God’s highest laws being kept alive. “Though they may imprison or kill most Mormons there will always be

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1 “You cannot take away any man’s Priesthood without transgression.”  
(*John Taylor, Times and Seasons* 6:922.)

“Endowments or blessings in the house of the Lord, no Patriarchal blessings, no ordination to the Priesthood, can be taken away, once given. To prevent for just cause from exercising the rights and privileges of acting in the offices of acting in the Priesthood [within the Church], may be and has been done, and the person so silenced still remain a member of the Church, but this does not take away from him any Priesthood that he held.” (*Joseph F. Smith, Improvement Era* 11:466.)

2 Joseph Smith, Mosiah Hancock Journal, p. 19.

someone left to carry on the work,”<sup>1</sup> said John Taylor, and he was a man who knew what his words meant. For he himself would spend most of his presidency in hiding, even from members who would have handed him in for the reward! And “woe unto those who cut men off from the Church for private pique, or to exercise undue dominion, or for any reason not prompted by truth and righteousness! All the acts of men, official or otherwise, will be reviewed and passed upon in that great day.”<sup>2</sup>

For as a First Presidency member, George Q. Cannon stated so powerfully, “I tell you, the salvation that will come to this people, will be through the faithfulness of the men of God and the women of God who, in the face of an opposing world, contrary to their traditions, to their education, to their preconceived notions and to the popular prejudices of the day - who have in the midst of all this stepped forward in the vanguard and obeyed the command of God, and have dared to endure all the consequences, and have been willing to endure all the penalties.”<sup>3</sup>

## Prophecy Six

President Cannon, made another important prophesy that has been fulfilled, when he said: “The day will come when men’s Priesthood and authority will be called into question, and you will find out that there will be hundreds who have no Priesthood, but believe they hold it, they holding only an office in the Church.”<sup>4</sup> His remarks it seems followed on from the prediction of President Taylor (which Brother Cannon would have heard firsthand, he also being at the meeting at which he spoke), **“I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at that time of the seventh**

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1 Deseret News Weekly, 25 February 1885.

2 Millennial Star 40:262-63.

3 George Q. Cannon, 8 October 1882, Journal of Discourses 23:280.

4 1901, Draper, Utah, as related by Daniel R. Bateman.

**President, and there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.”**<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that he said that these things would happen in the time of the seventh President of the Church, who of course was Heber J. Grant.

What might cause the Priesthood to cease amongst so many men, or could change so drastically as to prevent it being passed on? Certainly the attitude of members against Celestial Plural Marriage qualifies as one of those areas in which many might lose God’s favor and even bring the authority of some who fought against it into question. As an editorial from the Church’s own newspaper warned, “The entire Church and all of its Priesthood, with the Presidency at the head of it might motion and vote against this principle until doomsday with just one effect, (namely) to vote themselves away from the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from the possession of their Priesthood.”<sup>2</sup> As has been pointed out, such a vote did take place, and it was not without consequence.

In the same year Brother Cannon warned the Saints about losing the Priesthood, President Joseph F. Smith reaffirmed the method ordinations to the Priesthood should follow, and how, “the conferring of the Priesthood should precede and accompany ordination to an office, unless it is possessed by previous bestowal and ordination.”<sup>3</sup> Just as Brigham Young had instructed regarding ordinations, “Do not forget to confer the High Priesthood upon them.”<sup>4</sup>

However, Charles W. Penrose, Counselor to President Smith, must have disagreed with him on this point, and said shortly after his death, “We have been making a mistake in ordinations. We have been conferring the Priesthood, and it ought not to be done.... We should ordain directly to the office in the Priesthood.”<sup>5</sup> Instead of correcting Penrose, Heber J.

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1 Woolley affidavit, see fn. 2.

2 Deseret News, Editorial, 1 April 1885.

3 March 1901, Improvement Era 4:394.

4 Deseret News, 6 June 1877.

5 Stake Quarterly Conference, Utah Stake, Provo, Utah, 1919, as

Grant implemented his views, and on the 23rd of April 1921, the First Presidency announced a new form of ordinations in which the words “confer upon you the Melchizedek Priesthood” were removed.

Thirty-six years later, the Church returned to its original form of ordination, but the years in between in which they departed from President Smith’s strict instructions cannot be easily explained away. If we are to believe Joseph F. Smith, then during that period all the ordinations were invalid, as well as all the ordinances since by those ordained during that time, for he stated, “Surely a man cannot possess an appendage to the Priesthood without possessing the Priesthood itself, which he cannot obtain unless it be authoritatively conferred upon him.” As Brigham Young said, “No being can give that which he does not possess; consequently, no man can confer the Priesthood on another, if he has not himself first received it.”<sup>1</sup> However surprisingly President McKay made no effort to ordering the re-conferral of the Priesthood on everyone ordained during that time, and the re-performance of every ordinance by anyone ordained during that time, and so the situation has probably worsened considerably.

The removal of Priesthood conferral in ordination is only one area in which John Taylor’s prophecy has been fulfilled. The revocation or alteration of any other ordinance can cause the withdrawal of Priesthood (or at least produces questions over its effectiveness) from those who sustain such changes or participate in such an altered Gospel. As an early Church publication put it, “the priesthood can not continue when the gospel is perverted;”<sup>2</sup> Whilst specific examples are beyond the scope of this particular treatment, yet many books and magazine articles have been written outlining such changes, and it remains up to us as faithful Latter-day Saints to personally receive and perpetuate the ordinances of God as He has given them, because as Joseph stated, “that the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed;

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recollected by Daniel R. Peay.

1 History of the Church 4:257.

2 Times and Seasons, Nov. 15, 1841.

otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing.”<sup>1</sup>

The fulfillment of these last prophecies of President John Taylor in so literal a manner is another testimony that John Taylor did indeed fulfill a special purpose in setting in motion the manner through which the laws of God would continue, and that those set apart by him and who were present and testified of these events were both honest and accurate in their accounts. The Bible sets this as a sure test of truthfulness, but there is yet another test which leaves us with even greater certainty that God’s hand is in the work to keep the fullness of the Gospel alive, that is the Spirit of God. May that Spirit witness the truthfulness of the Priesthood authority that acts on His behalf, and the laws which he has not revoked, nor will He!

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p 169.

## Losing the Priesthood

*Another look at John Taylor's 1886 prophecy  
regarding the validity of the Priesthood in the Church*

In the Autumn of 1886, President John Taylor predicted that there would one day be a question over validity of the Priesthood held by many of the Saints:

“I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at that time of the seventh President, and there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.”<sup>1</sup>

President Taylor's worry it seemed was also shared by his counselor, George Q. Cannon. According to one witness, Cannon stated in a meeting with the Saints, that “The day will come when men's Priesthood and authority will be called into question, and you will find out that there will be hundreds who have no Priesthood, but believe they hold it, they holding only an office in the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Although there are no contemporary accounts of these particular statements, they are not dissimilar from other warnings and prophecies made by other Church leaders during the same era. For example, in 1884, President Taylor cautioned the Saints that “the time will come when it will be necessary for every man to trace the line in which he has received the Priesthood that he exercises. ... I believe this is of extreme importance, ... Every man should be careful on this point, to know where he gets his Priesthood; that it has come

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1 27 September 1886, John W. Woolley home, Centreville, Utah

2 1901, Draper, Utah, as related by Daniel R. Bateman, Ballard-Jensen Correspondence

to him clean and undefiled, legitimately;”<sup>1</sup>

These quotes raise many issues, such as what would cause some of the Saints to lose the Priesthood or give it incorrectly? How could such a situation arise in which this could occur, and some Saints not know about it; and how can we ensure that the Priesthood we hold is legitimate? Fortunately the Lord’s servants have left answers to all of these questions, although there are several different viewpoints on these matters which we will try to cover in this treatment of the subject.

## **Priesthood Conferral**

President Taylor’s prophecy has traditionally been interpreted amongst many Fundamentalists and their critics to refer only to the issue of changes in the wording of Priesthood ordinations. This was because he spoke of the Priesthood not being properly conferred, and he spoke of the prophecy coming to fulfillment during the time of the seventh President of the Church, during whose tenure the method of ordination certainly was altered.

Certainly, Church leaders such as Brigham Young stated the importance of conferring the Priesthood before ordaining to an office therein. “Do not forget to confer the High Priesthood”,<sup>2</sup> he instructed in 1877. In doing so he was following the precedent laid down with the restoration of the Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829, when John the Baptist spoke the words, “Upon my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron.”<sup>3</sup>

However, those who oppose the necessity of conferring the Priesthood have pointed out several Journal entries, which seem to chronicle ordination done early in this dispensation which did not use the word ‘confer’, as well as statements from some early General Authorities in which they expressed

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1 18 October 1884, Journal of Discourses 26:24

2 Deseret News, 6 June 1877

3 29 May 1829, D&C 13:1

that they believed it didn't matter if a conferral was done or not. Although it is quite probable that the reason why the diaries of early members did not contain the term 'confer' is because either they were primarily interested in recording the office they had been ordained to, or just expected that others who might read their account would assume a conferral had taken place. This does not explain, however, the remarks of Church authorities who did not think conferral was necessary.

President George Q. Cannon has been cited as someone who would have agreed with Heber J. Grant's alteration of the method of ordination,<sup>1</sup> yet he stated that "care should be taken to bestow the authority", and gave the conferral of Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver by John the Baptist as an ideal method of ordination.<sup>2</sup>

Of course we could conclude that those who disagreed with the need for conferral were just sharing an opinion of theirs, that had no effect on general practice of ordination amongst the Saints. Alternatively, we might think that they were wrong, or that it is due to ordinations they may have performed (without conferring) that the situation arose that President Taylor prophesied about. Such explanations do not seem to cover all of the accounts and statements. But there are aspects to this subject which have sometimes been overlooked.

Let us begin with our concept of the Priesthood and its offices. When Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood there was no indication that he was ordained to any office in it, and the Lord revealed to him on a couple of occasions that "offices in the Church are appendages to the Priesthood."<sup>3</sup> Or, in other words, that the Priesthood can exist apart from an appointment to a specific office or calling in the Church.

At least one Church authority, President Charles W. Penrose, had a different view on this matter. One LDS scholar summarized a sermon he gave in 1921 that touched on this issue, "President Penrose conveyed the impression that

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1 In Brian C. Hales, *Is Fundamentalism Fundamental?*

2 *Juvenile Instructor* 31:174-5, 1896.

3 28 March 1835, D&C 107:5 & D&C 84:29-30.



Priesthood does not exist apart from Priesthood offices.”<sup>1</sup>

This view was undoubtedly what led him to state a few years earlier, “We have been making a mistake in ordinations. We have been conferring the priesthood, and it ought not to be done. If we confer the Priesthood on a man, we give him all the offices and callings in the Church. We should ordain directly to the office in the Priesthood.”<sup>2</sup>

In that same year the First Presidency (which he was part of) made its first statement regarding ordaining without conferring,<sup>3</sup> and formally instructed the Priesthood in line with this view in 1921.<sup>4</sup>

It seems that before 1919 it was understood that a person being ordained was being given the Priesthood, yet after that point it was no longer certain, as the view had begun to take hold no one (apart from perhaps the Church President) had the Priesthood, but only had offices in the Church. The understanding of what the Priesthood was and who could hold it had changed fundamentally, from being ordained into the Melchizedek Priesthood to being ordained into the Church. Possibly it was because of this, that many receiving ordination under such situation might have indeed only received what they were promised - an office in the Church, without the Priesthood itself. In this way the change in ordination procedure could have been more of a sign of the prophecy being fulfilled rather than the only reason.

All of this happened despite Joseph F. Smith’s statement, as Church President in 1901, that conferring should precede ordination.<sup>5</sup> Whatever ambiguity may have existed before President Smith made it clear what method he expected in the Church, only to have it reversed a couple of decades later.

Even if ordinations had been done incorrectly

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1 Maxine Hanks, *Women and Authority*, Ch. 2, p. 39; see General Conference, April 1921, p. 108

2 Stake Quarterly Conference, Utah Stake, Provo, Utah, 1919, as recollected by Daniel R. Peay.

3 1919, in the Appendix of *Gospel Doctrine* by Joseph F. Smith.

4 23 April 1921 (see also *Missionary Handbooks* after that time).

5 1901, *Improvement Era* 4:394.

beforehand, President Smith set a standard, from which Heber J. Grant deviated, and opposed the explicit instructions of his predecessor on how ordinations were to be done. If differences in conferring had not invalidated ordinations before, one might argue that they did after President Smith made the matter clear.

Having treated the question of what part Priesthood ordinations may have played in John Taylor's prophesy questioning the validity of many of the Saint's authority, we need to look past the assumption it was fulfilled (or was even primarily) because of that issue. There were many other reasons and situations which the early prophets and apostles warned could lead to many – if not most – of the Saints losing the Priesthood or its power.

## **Celestial (Plural) Marriage – The Law of the Priesthood**

One area of great importance to this issue was that of Celestial (or Plural) Marriage. Most Latter-day Saints today might not easily see the correlation though, as they may think that it was practiced just to increase the number of Church members or as a trial of faith. Indeed it certainly was a trial and test of faith for those who lived it, but it was also an essential part of the faith of those who believed it to be a true principle.

The Latter-day Saints before the 1890's believed it to be “a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come,”<sup>1</sup> as the First Presidency of the time put it. It was also called the “Law of the Priesthood”<sup>2</sup> in the revelation which Joseph received on the subject in 1843. The Saints were also taught it was part of the restoration of the Gospel, that it was needed for God's kingdom to progress, and that through it God

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1 *First Presidency & Twelve, Petition for Amnesty, 19 December 1891.*

“The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.” (*Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11, p. 268 - p. 269, 19 August 1866*)

2 “I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was.” (D&C 132:28, 58, 61, 64)

sent his choicest spirits. It has been a source of controversy ever since, and an important principle in the issue of Priesthood authority.

Joseph was told by God, for instance, that if he did not proceed with establishing Plural Marriage that “his Priesthood would be taken from him.”<sup>1</sup> Those to whom he revealed that law were put under the same obligation, as John Taylor relates, “When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others.”<sup>2</sup> Heber was told by Joseph that if he did not take another wife he would lose his Apostleship.<sup>3</sup>

The word of the Lord was explicit upon this point; “It is not meet that men who will not abide My law shall preside over My Priesthood.”<sup>4</sup> As John Taylor clarified it; “A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus, a man’s Priesthood can be affected by what laws and commandments he refuses to live, and officiating in some offices is dependent upon fulfilling obligations the Lord has laid down to qualify those holding those callings. The Church and its apostles recognized this, and warned the Saints of the results of rejecting this law, and the effect it could have on the Priesthood -

“What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of ‘Mormonism’, more properly termed the Gospel of the Son of God? Simply to renounce, abrogate, or apostatize from the

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1 Eliza R. Snow, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, p. 69-70.

2 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222.

3 Life of Heber C. Kimball, Orson F. Whitney, p. 336, 1888 edition.

4 Revelation to John Taylor, October 13th, 1882, Church Historians Office.

5 John Taylor, October 10th, 1882, Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

new and everlasting covenant of marriage in its fulness. Were the Church to do that as an entirety God would reject the Saints as a body. The authority would be withdrawn, with its gifts and powers, and there would be no more heavenly recognition of the administrations among the people. The heavens would permanently withdraw themselves, and the Lord would raise up another people of greater valor and stability, for His work must, according to His unalterable degrees, go forward ...”<sup>1</sup>

“The entire Church and all of its Priesthood, with the Presidency at the head of it might motion and vote against this principle until doomsday with just one effect, (namely) to vote themselves away from the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from the possession of their Priesthood, and to find themselves very speedily outside the Church and Kingdom of God; while He would raise up others that would honor and observe His law.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus, those who sustained such a course (and still do oppose His laws), have placed themselves outside of God’s approval, without Him recognizing their Priesthood, as He works instead with those who will honor His laws.

### **Changing Ordinances = Changing Priesthood**

There is another area in which a person's Priesthood is affected and can be invalidated, and that is when they change ordinances from the pattern God reveals them, or assist in performing them in this altered fashion. From this point the power of the Priesthood begins to lessen, until all of its administrations are no longer valid. Joseph Smith was explicit on this point: “If there is no change of ordinances, there is no

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1 Charles W. Penrose, Deseret Evening News, April 23rd, 1885.

2 Deseret News, Editorial, 1 April 1885.

change of Priesthood.”<sup>1</sup> So it follows, that if ordinances change, so does the Priesthood of those who administer them.

As the Prophet Joseph also put clearly, “Where there is no change of Priesthood, there is no change of ordinances.”<sup>2</sup> The fact that ordinances have changed substantiates the argument that the Priesthood has been affected and lost through this.<sup>3</sup> The Prophet warned that this could happen and the consequences for those involved when he stated, “The ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing.”<sup>4</sup>

Some of the Saints may wonder what else has changed besides Celestial (plural) Marriage. Sadly, they are unlikely to ever read in their Church manuals or even hear in General Conference anymore about the Law of Adoption, Re-baptism (for health and other reasons), Mother’s Blessing, Prayer Circles in the home, or how the Endowment has changed substantially, and Priesthood offices and callings have been removed. Although some might still wonder, “Why can’t the Priesthood continue as it once did when ordinances change?” Brigham Young answered this, beginning with a question for them –

“Can any man or set of men officiate in dispensing the laws and administering the ordinances of the Kingdom of God or of the kingdoms and governments of the world legally, without first obeying those laws and submitting to those ordinances themselves?... no man has authority to officiate in the ordinances of heavenly or earthly governments only so far as he has obeyed them himself.”<sup>5</sup>

Why have such changes happened? They happened for the same reason in all dispensations, because many of the Saints want an easier life and to be more accepted by the

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1 2 July 1839, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 158.

2 11 June 1843, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308.

3 For the Priesthood being changed, there is made the necessity a change also of the law. (Paul, Hebrews 7:12)

4 5 October 1840, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 169, History of the Church 4:209.

5 Brigham Young, October 8th, 1854.

world, no matter what the cost. As the First Presidency admitted after the Church stopped living Celestial (Plural) Marriage, that the Saints had done so, “to be at peace with the Government and in harmony with their fellow citizens who were not of their faith and to share in the confidence of the Government and people, our people have voluntarily put aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Popularity with the World & Priesthood**

### **– Can They Co-Exist?**

When the Saints entered the Salt Lake valley, they saw it as an escape from the persecution that had plagued them from even before Joseph Smith began translating the gold plates. They had seen so many of their so-called friends turn traitors too many times, they had lost their homes, and some had lost their lives, but had come to build up Deseret in the hope that they would be far enough away from Babylon physically and emotionally to be able to build up Zion. Brother Brigham had this same hope, but realized that popularity and riches had tempted the Saints before and could again, and so gave them this warning about such a possibility: “When we see the time that we can willingly strike hands and have full fellowship with those who despise the Kingdom of God, know ye then that the Priesthood of the Son of God is out of your possession.”<sup>2</sup>

This was not the only occasion he made such a stark warning, or lamented this possibility - “There is nothing that would soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them. In such an event, we might bid farewell to the Holy Priesthood with all its blessings, privileges and aids to exaltations,

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1 Petition of Amnesty to Pres. B.F. Harrison , Messages of the First Presidency, Vol. 3, p. 229+

2 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 10:273.

principalities and powers in the eternities of the Gods.”<sup>1</sup>

He pointed out the simple fact that popularity and priesthood cannot fully co-exist, as in order to gain popularity you have to sacrifice true principles, and when that happens the priesthood is lost with them. Many might argue, however, that such a day has not yet come, and the Saints are still subject to the rejection of the world. While we may occasionally hear of some prejudices that still continue, the hate once reserved for the Mormons has long since subsided amongst most people in America (if not the world), as President Heber J. Grant noticed in his day -

“My greatest happiness I find in the goodwill and friendship that has developed among all classes of people at home and abroad toward the LDS church during my lifetime. In place of early-day persecution and bitterness we now enjoy high regard and happy associations with all denominations.”<sup>2</sup>

This situation could not have come without some cost being paid, without us downplaying or removing some of the beliefs and practices the world once found so offensive. James agreed that “friendship of the world is enmity with God;”<sup>3</sup> and Jesus (his brother) also taught that, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”<sup>4</sup>

We have already detailed some of the changes that occurred that led to this situation, and President George Q. Cannon spells out in detail what the results of such a course can only be - “There is nothing short of complete apostasy, a complete denial of every principle we have received, a throwing away of the Holy Priesthood, that can save us from persecution. When this takes place, the chief features of the

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1 Brigham Young, 8 April 1862, Journal of Discourses 10:32 (see 4:38).

2 Heber J. Grant, Salt Lake Tribune, 22 November 1938.

3 James 4:4.

4 John 15:18.

Gospel are obliterated.”<sup>1</sup>

We must remember though that the Lord has assured us that the Gospel was restored for the last time, and so will never be taken away again. Likewise, the authority to administer those ordinances must remain, and there must be a people upon the earth who maintain them in the very way God gave them.

Joseph Smith affirms, “The Priesthood will never be taken away.”<sup>2</sup> This does not mean however, that the Church as a body will always have the fullness of the Priesthood available to the general membership. President J. Reuben Clark put it plainly; “The Priesthood can exist without the Church, but the Church cannot exist without the Priesthood.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the Priesthood can act independently.

### **Excommunication and Priesthood**

– Does the Church or a Person’s Actions Affect Their Authority?

Where does all of this leave those who have maintained the ordinances as God restored them, who still live all of the laws of the Gospel, and believe all of it’s doctrines? A strange situation has arisen since the turn of the century that many of those not supporting the very changes that may invalidate the Priesthood have been told their Priesthood would not be recognized by the Church because of this. But, does the Church’s non-recognition of a persons authority invalidate that authority however? No, prophets and apostles have stated such action will be of no effect:

“Persons sometimes say that they have enjoyed the spirit of the work as much since they were cut off as when they were in the Church. Have they enjoyed the Spirit? Yes. Why? Simply because they were cut off in such a way that it did not take the Spirit of God from

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1 George Q. Cannon, 15 June 1881, Journal of Discourses 22:373.

2 Millennial Star 8:139.

3 J. Reuben Clark, March 1936, Improvement Era p. 134.



them. And the reason why they were cut off was because they did not come up to the particular standard of perfection of those who dealt with them, or they did not come up to their feelings.”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, President Taylor prophesied that this would happen, as did Joseph Smith –

“Some of you will be handled and ostracized and cast out from the Church by your brethren because of your faithfulness and integrity to this principle, and some of you will have to surrender your lives because of the same, but woe, woe, unto those who shall bring these troubles upon you.”<sup>2</sup>

“You will live to see men arise in power in the Church who will seek to put down your friends and the friends of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Many will be hoisted because of their money and worldly learning which they seem to be in possession of; and many who are the true followers of our Lord and Savior will be cast down.”<sup>3</sup>

To many Latter-day Saints, being cut off from the Church must seem the worst punishment possible, and many of those who receive it undoubtedly do because of their own transgressions. But excommunication itself is a formal ceremony to confirm or dispute alleged misconduct, the act which causes excommunication happens before it ever reaches the Church court, and God makes his judgment at the moment the sin is committed.

However, like any organization, whether ecclesiastical, social or in the world of business, the Church has the right to withhold or withdraw membership to anyone it sees fit. This does not mean however, that God will always acknowledge

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1 Millennial Star 24:99.

2 John Taylor, 27 September 1886.

3 Joseph Smith to Mosiah Hancock, as recorded in his Journal, p. 19.

and approve whatever Church leaders do, only on the condition that it is in accordance with His commandments. As He states, “The powers of heaven cannot be controlled or handled, only upon principles of righteousness.”<sup>1</sup>

The Priesthood is the authority upon which the Church was organized. The Church does not have power over the Priesthood itself, although it can choose not to recognize a particular person's administrations. It may even say with some certainty that committing certain actions will leave a person without the companionship of the Spirit, the privilege of operating within Church callings, and that God will deprive them of the power of the Priesthood where they are unworthy of it. However, as President John Taylor pointed out, “You cannot take away any man’s priesthood without transgression.”<sup>2</sup>

The Lord is ultimately the only authority who can make final approval on the actions of someone holding and exercising the Priesthood, and can only be taken away by He who gave the power in the first place, which is something that Church leaders such as Brother Joseph F. Smith once taught and recognized – “No endowments or blessings in the house of the Lord, no patriarchal blessings, no ordination to the Priesthood can be taken away, once given.”<sup>3</sup>

Those who had hoped to disprove John Taylor’s prophecy regarding the Priesthood and the other statements and events that took place at the same meeting in 1886, can see once again that the doctrines of the Gospel and the prophecies of God’s servants cannot be so easily explained away or ignored, but are substantiated again and again.

*This may leave many mainstream LDS Church members who might be reading this asking themselves – “If I found that someone in my line of authority was ordained during the period when Priesthood was not conferred properly, or by those who lost the Priesthood because of their actions; then how do I know that my Priesthood authority is*

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1 Doctrine and Covenants 121:36.

2 Times & Seasons 6:922.

3 Improvement Era 11:466.

*valid?" Those in such a situation would be better to have their ordinances re-administered by someone with the correct authority. The Lord before this point may have blessed them with a portion of His Spirit because the intent of their heart was to do His will, but with the knowledge they now have, it is no longer enough, they are now without excuse, and will be accountable for what they have learned.*

*Following God in such matters may mean coming into conflict with leaders in the Church, but the Lord has always maintained a body of Priesthood willing to live all of His laws at any cost, and there will be many whose names may not be upon the earthly records of the Church but are written in the Heavenly Lamb's Book of Life. We can best uphold the Church by maintaining the foundation on which it was built, and keeping alive in our own lives those principles that at the moment the majority do not want or are unable to live.*

## Has Joseph Smith Been Resurrected?

There are those who argue that Joseph Smith was not resurrected by the time of his 1886 visitation to John Taylor, so therefore the events described by Lorin Woolley and others couldn't have happened. It is the sincere belief of most Fundamentalists that he was resurrected, but others argue that his body was dug up by the Reorganized Church after 1886, and that this 'proves' the events of 1886 never occurred. The simplest answer Fundamentalists have to offer is that the bodies dug up were not those of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

It seems to be a question of whether we believe that the Reorganized Church is a trustworthy source for verifying the identity of the bodies. Perhaps they had an agenda for claiming that the body was that of Joseph Smith, as Samuel Bennion, an LDS authority who was shown the skeletons at the time noted – “It is my impression brethren, that he had heard reports that Brigham Young took the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum to Utah and that he wanted to prove it untrue.”<sup>1</sup> The fact that there were reports of Brigham Young taking Joseph's body to Salt Lake raises that as a possibility.

It must be asked though, “How did Frederick Smith know where to find the bodies? They were meant to have been in an unmarked grave (as the Saints were worried about the bodies being desecrated), and even Joseph's son David Hyrum did not know its whereabouts as he lamented in the old hymn, “The Unknown Grave”, which was once part of both the LDS and RLDS hymnals.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the Old Testament speaks of no man knowing the sepulcher of Moses, yet we know that he was translated and that his body didn't lie in the dust.<sup>3</sup>

Could the President of the RLDS Church have dug up some other men? Does this explain the differences between

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1 Samuel O. Bennion to Heber J. Grant, January 21, 1928, Church Archives.

2 #8 in 1909 edition of the Deseret Sunday School Union hymnal.

3 Deuteronomy 34:5-6, Alma 45:18-19.

the death mask and the skull found? The science of forensics was practically non-existent in the 1920's, and it was a period when skeletal fossil hoaxes were common. We have no DNA preserved of the Prophet with which to prove even to the convincing of Gentile scientists who was buried and who was dug up. So we cannot claim with absolute certainty that the body was that of Joseph and that he wasn't resurrected, no matter how strong the desire of some to disbelieve Woolley's account is.

Another question also raises itself with the timing of the 'discovery' of the bodies: Why would Lorin Woolley even attempt to claim Joseph was resurrected a year after his body had supposedly been unearthed? If he was fabricating his story, surely he would have avoided giving the impression Joseph was resurrected so that it wouldn't undermine his tale. It might be concluded that it was only if he had actually seen what he said he did would he feel duty bound and unafraid to declare what he really saw, despite what the Reorganized Church claimed.

All of this is only a list of possibilities, but it shows that there are alternative explanations, and that it was indeed possible for Joseph to have been resurrected. Besides this there are also other indications that he was indeed resurrected some time after his death and before the 1920s, that further substantiate Lorin Woolley's testimony.

As early as 1847, Brigham Young told the Saints whilst "clothed with the Spirit" that, "... we should yet have Brothers Joseph and Hyrum and many of the Saints in their resurrected bodies with us on earth."<sup>1</sup> In the 1880's Erastus Snow prophesied that the day would come very soon after, "The time is drawing near (much nearer than scarcely any of us can now comprehend) when Joseph will be clothed upon with immortality ..."<sup>2</sup>

Heber C. Kimball even gave a description of the conditions in which Joseph Smith would return embodied to earth, "the Saints will be put to tests that will try the integrity

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1 30 July 1847, Wilford Woodruff Journal 3:244.

2 1884, Journal of Discourses 25:32-34.

of the best of them. The pressure will become so great that the more righteous among them will cry unto the Lord day and night until deliverance comes. Then the Prophet and others will make their appearance, ...”<sup>1</sup> Surely the events of the 1880s with the Prophet John Taylor in hiding and thousands of men having been put in jail for their belief in Mormonism, there was no better time for this prediction to be fulfilled.

Indeed the Lord himself said in 1882 to his Prophet in a revelation that, “Joseph Smith ... was slain ... but he yet lives, and is with me where I am.”<sup>2</sup> The Lord testified of a living Joseph Smith, just as his servants have sometimes proclaimed of a living Jesus Christ. How could Joseph Smith be where a resurrected and glorified Savior and His Heavenly Father lives without he himself having a resurrected body with which to endure their glory and that of their kingdom?

Apart from the testimony of Lorin Woolley, two other men who had John Taylor stay at their home left their witness that the Prophet Joseph had been visiting President John Taylor during the time he was in hiding. The first was whilst he was at the William Hill home, during part of 1885, when “he was visited at least once by Joseph Smith” according to Hill and Barbara O. Kelsch<sup>3</sup>. The second occasion was in the summer of 1886, when Taylor “... had been conversing with the Prophet Joseph Smith” at the Alfred Carlisle home, according to Carlisle himself<sup>4</sup>, Philo Dibble (who confirmed Joseph had come “in his body”<sup>5</sup>), and Marriner W. Merrill<sup>6</sup>, who was told of it by John Taylor himself.

A devout Latter-day Saint (and non-Fundamentalist) had the truth of Joseph’s resurrected status revealed to him when visiting the spirit world in June 1898, and related, “as to whether or not the Prophet Joseph Smith is now a resurrected being. While I did not ask the question, they read it in my

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1 Deseret News, May 23, 1931; Modern Times, Cleon Skousen, p. 31-2.

2 Unpublished Revelations 81:19.

3 Hill manuscript collection, LDS Church Archives.

4 Alfred Carlisle, submitted to LDS Archives, April 1978.

5 John Moon Clements journal, 31 July 1886.

6 Abraham H. Cannon Journal, July 7th, 1891

mind and immediately said, ‘You wish to know whether the Prophet has his body or not?’ I replied, ‘Yes, I would like to know.’ I was told that the Prophet Joseph Smith has his body, as does also his brother Hyrum.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps some will place greater faith in the findings of the Reorganized Church, the arguments of anti-Fundamentalists, or the reasoning of those who do not have the same testimony that Lorin Woolley and others have had. But thousands of Fundamentalists rely on a spiritual witness of the events of September 1886, that kept alive the authority to live all of God's laws, and have little doubt that Joseph the Prophet is preparing to return again to the earth to fulfill his mission. For we remain in a day of spiritual and physical bondage, in which God's Church is wandering in the wilderness, and all things must be set in order before the coming of the Savior.

Note: Two other views on this subject have also been related to me by others, although these theories are perhaps unusual and held by only a small minority, I have included them here for the readers interest and to allow them to judge for themselves.

Let us suppose for a moment that Joseph Smith's actual body was unearthed in the 1920's. This could mean that either Lorin Woolley was mistaken and that Joseph Smith appeared as a Spirit, or that some of our views may be mistaken about what the resurrection involves.

Although most ‘traditional’ Fundamentalists do not seem to believe that Woolley just saw the spirit of Joseph Smith in 1886, a few have put forth the theory that this was not just possible, but was what actually occurred. The one line in Lorin's whole account that would tend to discourage such a view is where he related that he and Charles Wilkins shook hands with the Prophet Joseph. Some might argue that even this though does not necessarily mean he was physically embodied – as we know that the pre-mortal Jesus touched the stones the Brother of Jared gave him,<sup>2</sup> and we have accounts of evil spirits exerting physical force.<sup>3</sup>

Another view argues that as far as our knowledge of the resurrection is concerned, it is very limited, and some have supposed that

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1 Peter E. Johnson, “Mission Unfinished”, Relief Society Magazine, Aug. 1920.

2 Ether 3:6.

3 See Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses 3:229–230.

the only reason the body of Jesus was divinely removed was because otherwise others would claim He was an impostor upon His return. The Gospels do give the impression though it was the same body that He took up again.<sup>1</sup>

There is another opinion of the resurrection though, and it is that our bodies will be resurrected at the same age (33) at which Jesus died.<sup>2</sup> If true, then it could mean that our resurrected bodies may be substantially different than our mortal bodies – as the cells (if not the atoms) that make up our flesh and bones would have replaced themselves completely over time – and so the resurrected body may still be essentially our body, but a younger version, whilst the atoms of the older body are still left to deteriorate in the grave. Proponents of this argument claim it is hard to discount the possibility entirely as some bodies are born without limbs or disfigured, and so we may not be able to assume that our resurrected bodies are made entirely from our earthly ones.

It is interesting to consider such alternative views, however speculative, although they raise as many questions as they try to answer. Most of those with a testimony of Lorin Woolley's account are happy to leave such details to God to explain in His own time, rather than try to come to a certainty with our limited perspective and knowledge on this subject.

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1 The nature of the mortal and resurrected body do differ though, as 1 Corinthians 15:44 points out.

2 Philippians 3:21 may hint at this.



# **Authority & Succession**

*This section answers the following questions:*

## **Who Holds the Keys?**

*How can we tell who holds the keys of the Priesthood?*

## **Heber J. Grant – Prophet of God?**

*Did Heber J. Grant qualify to hold all of the keys?*

## **John W. Woolley – Profile of a Prophet**

*How did John Woolley qualify to preside over the Priesthood?*

## **Lorin C. Woolley to Joseph W. Musser**

*Who were John Woolley's successors (to 1954)?*

*Note: it is expected that a future volume will look at those after 1954, as well as the roles Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow held.*

## Who Holds the Keys?

“It is necessary to know who holds the keys of power, and who does not or we are likely to be deceived.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 336)

Most orthodox LDS Church members and Mormon Fundamentalists accept Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and John Taylor as Prophets, Church Presidents, and Presidents of the Priesthood, all holding the keys of Elijah (or the authority to preside over all of the ordinances). Past this point there has been some controversy over Wilford Woodruff to Joseph F. Smith and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

For those studying the fullness of the Gospel who realize the need for the authority to live the higher laws and ordinances of the Gospel, this can lead to confusion: Have the keys of the Priesthood continued to our day and how can we judge who holds them? The best – if not the only source – our Latter-day Saint readers will accept is the teachings of and revelations to those Prophets we all agree on the calling and authority of. If we claim authority through Joseph Smith and say we believe in the word of the Lord to him, then there is no better place to begin to study these matters than with the Doctrine and Covenants.

### A Continuation of the Keys of the Priesthood

The first question we need to address is whether the Lord has promised that the keys of the Priesthood would continue throughout this dispensation. God answered this

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1 Just as Mormonism found itself with many people claiming to be Joseph's successor after his death, likewise most Fundamentalists accept John and Lorin Woolley (Because of the authority they received through John Taylor in September 1886) as leaders appointed by God, but after Lorin's death there arose many men claiming to be his successor, or to have authority independently of him.

within the same year of the organization of the Church and just a year following Joseph receiving the Priesthood from Peter, James and John, when He promised that the “keys of my kingdom” were committed “for the last times; and for the fullness of times.”<sup>1</sup> He later informed the Prophet that it would be those keys “committed unto man” that would allow the Gospel to “roll forth ... until it has filled the whole earth.”<sup>2</sup> As those times have not yet come, the keys must remain to fulfil God’s promises and purposes.

But is it still possible those keys could have been lost if the Lord’s prophet ‘fell’ and disqualified himself? The Lord has allowed for such a possibility, and made the provision that even in a situation where the man holding the keys might become unworthy of his calling, that responsibility would pass to someone who was qualified and who had received that authority through him:

“But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.

For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.”<sup>3</sup>

Worthiness, however, is not the only condition upon which those who claim to hold the keys and preside over them must meet.

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1 Doctrine and Covenants 27:13.

2 Doctrine and Covenants 65:2.

3 Doctrine and Covenants 43:4.

## A Continuation of Ordinances, and Laws

The Prophet Joseph clearly taught the Saints that all the ordinances of the Gospel were “instituted in heaven before the foundation of this world in the Priesthood for the salvation of man,” that they were “not to be altered or changed,” and that “all must be saved upon the same principles.” He added that they “must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing.”<sup>1</sup>

Even Joseph Smith’s Priesthood authority was dependent upon him receiving all of the ordinances in the manner that God restored them, as we can see from the Lord’s promise to him that “the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from” him “while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances.”<sup>2</sup>

If this was a condition upon which Joseph’s authority rested, then it would also be a test by which we can judge anyone who claims to be his successor and hold the keys he did. Have they received all the ordinances, and kept them “in the very way God has appointed,” or are there ordinances they have not received or changes they have tried to make to those they have? Could any man ever have the right to perform an ordinance he had not received? Brigham Young posed this same question to the Saints of his day:

“Can any man or set of men officiate in dispensing the laws and administering the ordinances of the Kingdom of God or of the kingdoms and governments of the world legally, without first obeying those laws and submitting to those ordinances themselves? ... do not forget that no man has authority to officiate in the ordinances of heavenly or earthly governments only so far as he has obeyed them himself.”<sup>3</sup>

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 168-9, see Hebrews 7:12.

2 Doctrine and Covenants 64:5.

3 Manuscript Addresses of Brigham Young, October 8th, 1854.

That keeping alive such ordinances is necessary to hold and exercise the keys of the Priesthood is something Joseph Smith explained very plainly in his day:

“The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God.”<sup>1</sup>

He was also told by the Lord that if he did not introduce a principle, he would lose any authority he already had:

“An angel of God ... told him that, unless he moved forward and establish plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him.”<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, Heber C. Kimball was told by the Prophet that if he did not take another wife “he would lose his Apostleship.”<sup>3</sup> This was not just a condition placed upon Brothers Joseph and Heber, but upon all the Apostles:

“When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others.”<sup>4</sup>

The necessity of living this high and holy law to be

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1 History of the Church 6:251.

2 Eliza R. Snow, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, p. 69-70.

3 Life of Heber C. Kimball, Orson F. Whitney, p. 336 (1888 edition).

4 John Taylor, 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222.

able to preside over the Priesthood was repeated again by the Lord to his servant John Taylor in 1882, in which He said:

“Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the Priesthood and people of my Church: ... You may appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to My law: For it is not meet that men who will not abide My law shall preside over My Priesthood; ... For My Priesthood, whom I have called and whom I have sustained and honored, shall honor one and obey my laws, and the laws of my Holy Priesthood, or they shall not be considered worthy to hold my Priesthood, saith the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Some might ask, as undoubtedly some of the Saints did during President Taylor’s tenure, “Apart from the exalting purpose of this divine law, why was it so essential to the issue of Priesthood authority?” To this he plainly answered that “a man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law.”<sup>2</sup>

## **A Continuation of Apostleship and the Fullness of the Priesthood**

Although “all Priesthood is Melchizedek”,<sup>3</sup> the Lord has designated different offices with specific commissions as well as special callings which both grant and limit the responsibilities of those called. The highest of all the offices within the Priesthood is that of Apostle, which comprehends all other offices.

They “hold the keys to open up the authority” of God’s kingdom,<sup>4</sup> they can “ordain and set in order all the other

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1 Revelation to John Taylor, 13 October 1882, Unpublished Revelations 83:4-5,15.

2 John Taylor, *Life of Wilford Woodruff*, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

3 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 180.

4 Doctrine and Covenants 124:128.

officers of the church.”<sup>1</sup> They were acknowledged as “Prophets, Seers, Revelators, and special witnesses to all the nations of the earth, holding the keys of the kingdom;”<sup>2</sup> and were “enabled to unlock and unravel all things pertaining to the government of the Church, the welfare of society, the future destiny of men, and the agency, power and influence of spirits.”<sup>3</sup>

However, even being an Apostle does not necessarily given a person all of the authority or keys of the Priesthood. The Prophet Joseph taught that there were different degrees within the Melchizedek Priesthood itself, and it wasn’t until the autumn of 1843 that he was “anointed and ordained to the highest and holiest order of the Priesthood.”<sup>4</sup> This was fourteen years after he first received the Priesthood and became an Apostle himself,<sup>5</sup> eight years after the formation of the Quorum of Twelve,<sup>6</sup> seven after he received the keys of the Priesthood in the Kirtland Temple,<sup>7</sup> and a year after he first received the Endowment!<sup>8</sup> He left us in no doubt that this authority was essential and that the Lord intended it to continue:

“My feelings at the present time are that, inasmuch as the Lord Almighty has preserved me until today, He will continue to preserve me, by the united faith and prayers of the Saints, until I have fully accomplished my mission in this life, and so firmly established the dispensation of the fullness of the priesthood in the last days, that all the powers of earth and hell can never prevail against it.”<sup>9</sup>

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1 Doctrine and Covenants 107:58.

2 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 109.

3 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 206, see p. 74.

4 Joseph Smith Diary, 18 September 1843.

5 Joseph Smith is called an Apostle in D&C 20:2 & Doctrine and Covenants 21:1.

6 14 February 1835.

7 Doctrine and Covenants 110.

8 May 1842.

9 History of the Church 5:139.

Not all of the Apostles or members of the First Presidency were considered ready or worthy to obtain this before Joseph's death, and because of this Brigham Young could rightly claim greater authority than Sidney Rigdon (who had not received that degree of Priesthood) and William Marks (who was not living all of God's laws). Heber C. Kimball told Rigdon at the time that "He has no authority, only what he receives from the Church. ... He has not got the same authority as others: there are more than thirty men who have got higher authority than he has."<sup>1</sup>

Those Apostles and others who received this ordinance were considered the elect of God and members of the Church of the Firstborn,<sup>2</sup> a higher organization with a greater mandate than the earthly LDS Church. Those who had not received this authority – no matter what their office in the Church – were considered subordinate to the quorum these Saints were members of, as is illustrated by a letter of the Twelve to William Smith:

"The President of the Church and each of our Quorum [of Twelve Apostles] are amenable to the Quorum of which you are a member."<sup>3</sup>

This raises a question we must ask those who claim to have all the authority that is necessary to administer the ordinances of exaltation, "Do they have the fullness of the Priesthood?" A man can only receive a fullness of the Priesthood from someone else who has, and it is only valid if they have received all necessary ordinances of the temple first, as Joseph taught that –

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1 Times and Seasons 5:663, see Trial of Sidney Rigdon, 8 September 1844. Note: Heber called those with higher authority "the secret Priesthood", see William Clayton diary, 23 May 1843.

2 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 237.

3 Letter of the Twelve to William Smith, Succession in the Presidency, B.H. Roberts, p. 23.



“If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Heber Kimball wouldn’t mention the names of those “who have got authority” in Nauvoo as he feared “the enemy will try to kill them.”<sup>2</sup> President Young was also worried about this prospect, but was determined that whatever happened to him the authority should continue.

“I know there are those in our midst who will seek the lives of the Twelve as they did the lives of Joseph and Hyrum. We shall ordain others and give the fullness of the priesthood, so that if we are killed the fullness of the priesthood may remain.”<sup>3</sup>

It was paramount to keep that ordinance alive, because through it the highest and fullest degree of Priesthood was given, and without it no one could gain their exaltation or have the authority to exercise the full keys of the Priesthood and preside over them.

## **A Continual and Uninterrupted Line of Succession**

God’s “house is a house of order”<sup>4</sup> and whenever He has had men with authority upon the earth, one of them, by reason of seniority or special appointment has presided, and stood as an administrator and judge over all of the ordinances and laws of the Gospel. This is the pattern designated in the word of the Lord in which God states, “it must needs be that one be appointed of the High Priesthood to preside over the priesthood ... from the same comes the administering of

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308.

2 Trial of Sidney Rigdon, 8 September 1844.

3 Brigham Young, History of the Church 7:230.

4 Doctrine and Covenants 132:8.

ordinances and blessings.”<sup>1</sup> There is only one man who occupies that presiding position at any one time,<sup>2</sup> and (as we pointed out at the beginning of our treatment of this subject), the Lord has designed that there will be a continual and uninterrupted line of men holding these keys until Jesus returns.

When assessing the claims of those who would call themselves Joseph Smith’s successor as head of the Priesthood and holder of its keys, we have a right and responsibility to ask ourselves if they meet the criteria given in the scriptures and teachings of the prophets. Can they show:

- A continuation of administering all the same ordinances unchanged.
- A continuation of maintaining the same laws, and living them.
- A continuation of living and keeping alive Celestial Plural Marriage.
- A continuation of the office of Apostle.
- A continuation of the fullness of the Priesthood.
- A continual and uninterrupted line of authority and succession from Joseph Smith to them.

If they can satisfy all of these requirements then there is only one thing left for us to do, and that is to pray to the Lord for a spiritual witness that this person is the Lord’s anointed Prophet (if our study of these areas has not already led us to that testimony), and to join with those Saints who share our faith, so that we can build up God’s kingdom with them, and prove ourselves worthy of receiving all of God’s ordinances and living all His laws.

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1 Doctrine and Covenants 107:65,67.

2 “There is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:7)

## Heber J. Grant – Prophet of God? *or just President of the Church?*

At the death of President Joseph F. Smith, the LDS Church stood at a crossroads. He was the last Church leader alive to have known the Prophet Joseph, and was the last prophet at the head of the Church who lived Plural Marriage whilst in that calling. With his passing came the end of an era. Who could fill his shoes?

The most senior Apostle at the death of Joseph F. Smith was John W. Young. He had been ordained an Apostle in 1855<sup>1</sup>, 27 years before Heber J. Grant, who was next most senior. But Elder Young was never called to the Quorum of Twelve, it seems he wasn't considered for succession a candidate by the rest of the Twelve, and he didn't seem to seek or contest Grant's appointment. This may surprise many Church members who may have assumed that all the Apostles are members of the Quorum of the Twelve, and that there has ever been any question – even amongst the Apostles – as to who was qualified to lead.

Since the presidency of Lorenzo Snow, the Church had filled the office of Church President automatically after the death of the previous President,<sup>2</sup> and so the question of who would be the next President was already decided by seniority in the Quorum of Twelve. President Brigham Young, however, made it clear that a man being President of the Church didn't necessarily make them Prophet, and that God calls prophets,

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1 Born 1 October 1844 in Nauvoo. Son of Brigham Young, who ordained him, 22 November 1855 (at age 11). Re-ordained 4 February 1864, and made an assistant councilor to the First Presidency (although not publicly sustained until 8 April 1873). Became a councilor to the Quorum of Twelve, 4 September 1877. Resigned as Counselor and released, 3-6 October 1891 (reasons for resignation Deseret News, 10 Oct 1891, p. 508). Died 11 February 1924 in New York (considered a worthy Latter-day Saint at time of death).

2 On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1900 it was decided that seniority would be by the date someone entered the quorum and not by the date ordained.

but that the people appoint Presidents of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

To answer the question of who succeeded President Smith as prophet and holder of the keys of the Priesthood we will look at the man most Latter-day Saints believe fulfilled that role – Heber Jeddy Grant.

Heber was the son of Brigham Young’s counselor, Jedediah Grant, and was born 22 Nov 1856. His father, however, died when he was still a baby. Even as a youth he became an effective businessman, and although his mother had hopes of him becoming a leader of the Church he told her at the time to “get it out of your head ... I do not want to be an Apostle! ... I do not want to be anything but a business man!”<sup>2</sup> Yet he found himself being given Priesthood responsibilities beyond his years from the age of 15 when he was ordained a Seventy, and by the time he was 23 he was called as a Stake President.

Yet despite perhaps having the emotional maturity of such a high calling at such a young age, there is some question over whether he had the necessary spiritual maturity. This is illustrated by a conversation he had with Joseph F. Smith (who was then a member of the First Presidency). Heber had confided in Joseph that he could not seem to speak with the Spirit, to which President Smith asked him if he knew the Gospel was true. Grant admitted “No, I do not know it!”<sup>3</sup> Smith hoped to release him after hearing this, and coincidentally the majority of the members in his stake actually voted not to sustain Heber.<sup>4</sup> However, he somehow managed to remain in his position.

It is important to remember that during this era of the Church’s history, Plural Marriage was not just recommended,

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- 1 “Does a man’s being a Prophet in this Church prove that he shall be the President of it? I answer, no! A man may be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and it may have nothing to do with his being the President of the Church. Suffice it to say, that Joseph was the President of the Church, as long as he lived; the people chose to have it so.” (JD 1:133)
  - 2 Gospel Standards, p. 11.
  - 3 Heber J. Grant, Improvement Era, July 1939.
  - 4 Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power (D. Michael Quinn), Appendix 2 – Heber J. Grant / Mormon Experience, p. 659.

but mandated for Church leaders. It was a “law of the Priesthood” that was considered essential to exaltation. In light of this it is interesting to learn of a particular case that came before him whilst he was a Stake President. It seems that some time between 1880 and 1882, President Grant had some disagreement with Bishop Samuel Woolley, and the Bishop objected to Heber trying to correct him, because Heber was still monogamous and Woolley was living a higher law, and was therefore outside of his jurisdiction.

We’ll take up the story from an account given by the son of the Assistant Church Historian at the time: “Brother Grant took the question up with his file leaders, President John Taylor and counselors. They instructed him that Brother Woolley was right, since he (Brother Grant) was not living or abiding in the law, he was not qualified to direct Brother Woolley who was faithfully abiding in that law.”<sup>1</sup>

This principle was reiterated by the Lord in a revelation to President Taylor in October 1882, which called Heber J. Grant and two others to greater positions of authority:

“Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the Priesthood and people of my Church: ...

You may appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to my law: For it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood; ...

For my Priesthood, whom I have called and whom I have sustained and honored, shall honor me and obey my laws, and the laws of my Holy Priesthood, or they shall not be considered worthy to hold my Priesthood, saith the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

The law which Seymour Young was not living that the

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1 Joseph Musser's 'autobiographical' journal, p. 68-9.

2 Revelation to John Taylor, 13 October 1882. Unpublished Revelations 83:1,4-5,15. This was published as a pamphlet by the Church, and in Swedish, German and Danish versions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Lord required him to before he could preside was Celestial (Plural) Marriage. At the time he had only one wife (Ann Riter), but in order to keep this law he later married again (Abbie Wells). John Taylor made it clear how he understood the revelation himself when he stated on the day he received it, “A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law.”<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with these divine instructions, Heber married two additional wives (his first being Lucy Stringham whom he married in 1877), Huldah Winters and Emily Wells a day apart in May 1884. Thus he began to qualify to fulfill his responsibilities as an Apostle of the Lord.

Even with his call to the Apostleship, at least one of the Quorum of Twelve, John Henry Smith, continued to doubt his spiritual qualifications and complained that Heber did not have “a testimony of the truth.”<sup>2</sup> Worries about Grant’s testimony and intentions continued, and L. John Nuttall (secretary to Wilford Woodruff) later commented that he worried “for the welfare of the Church and kingdom” as, in his opinion, “financial matters [had] more weight with ... Brother Heber J. Grant than the things of the Kingdom.”<sup>3</sup> Others worried about Grant’s mental health, as he had suffered a nervous breakdown just prior to being an Apostle, and would suffer more later in life.<sup>4</sup> Despite these concerns he remained a member of the Quorum of Twelve.

Just as he had later publicly admitted he didn't have a testimony when he was a Stake President, as an Apostle he confided privately in his fellow Quorum members that he “had never had an inspired dream in his life” and that he had never seen his deceased father (although it was later claimed that he had done so earlier in 1883). He further revealed in 1898 that he had never seen Jesus nor heard his voice.

In 1890, after much pressure from the American

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1 Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

2 Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power (D. Michael Quinn), 13 October 1882, p. 780.

3 L. John Nuttall Journal, 5 October 1888.

4 Francis M. Lyman journal, 7 January 1882.

government who no longer even recognized the existence of the LDS Church, President Wilford Woodruff issued a press release we now call the Manifesto asking members to refrain from breaking the laws of the land in their marriages. To many members this seemed to be the end of Celestial Plural Marriage, but others did not place the same importance on the law of the land or press releases when compared to the laws of God. President Woodruff himself had prophesied two years earlier that the Saints wouldn't, "quit practicing Plural Marriage until Christ shall come,"<sup>1</sup> which Grant recorded in his journal at the time.

Eleven years after the Manifesto Lorenzo Snow encouraged Heber to secretly take another wife.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, he approached Fanny Woolley (the sister of John W. Woolley) that year and asked her to marry him. She, however, felt more impressed with Stake President George Parkinson (already a post-Manifesto polygamist), and became his plural wife a year later.<sup>3</sup> By 1903 a warrant was out for his arrest for continuing to live plural marriage, and he was given an assignment in England to enable him to flee the country. Before he did so, George F. Gibbs, the secretary to the First Presidency reiterated that he should try to take another wife whilst there, but there is no record but rumor that he ever did.<sup>4</sup>

He did remain living with his existing plural wives however, and in 1899 even had to go to court and pay a fine for breaking the 'unlawful cohabitation' law against plural marriage.<sup>5</sup> But by 1908, with the death of his wife Emily, he found himself a monogamist again.

Following the death of Joseph F. Smith, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1918, Anthon H. Lund proposed Heber J. Grant as Church President. Grant then chose him as a counselor, then Lund set apart Grant. After which, Lund was sustained

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1 Heber J. Grant Journal, 17 May 1888. See also John Henry Smith Journal.

2 Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, 5 Jan. 1906, Grant Papers, LDS Church Archives; Grant, May-June 1901 Notebook, 26 May 1901.

3 See Matthias F. Cowley trial.

4 Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, 5 Jan. 1906.

5 Salt Lake Tribune, 9 September 1899 (his last child was evidence).

President of the Council of Twelve.<sup>1</sup> Thus he became the first President of the Church who was monogamous during his presidency. In fact, he claimed at least twice in General Conference that “no man living [had] authority to solemnize plural marriage.”<sup>2</sup> Where those keys went he did not say.

From having once been a supporter of the rights of polygamists, as Church President he seemed to see them as criminals that should be punished. In the April 1931<sup>3</sup> Conference, for example, he promised to assist in prosecuting post-Manifesto polygamists, although as before noted, he himself tried to take a wife after the Manifesto and was prosecuted for continuing to live polygamously after that time.

A couple of years later, a “final Manifesto,” which had been prepared by J. Reuben Clark and signed by Grant was read aloud in every congregation and seemed to once-and-for-all end any official approval or overlooking of plural marriage by Church leaders. The statement was full of many factual errors, however, as it stated that a revelation from John Taylor commanding the uninterrupted continuation of plural marriage was not in the Church archives and was unknown to President Grant (although he had been at several meetings where it had been discussed in decades previously,<sup>4</sup> and Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. had seen it in the archives himself before that time).<sup>5</sup> The statement also alleged that “Celestial Marriage ... and plural marriage are not synonymous terms” which contradicted the teachings of all Church Presidents prior to Grant.<sup>6</sup>

President Grant’s statements against that principle

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1 See Dialogue, Vol.20, No.2, p.53.

2 April 1921 & October 1926.

3 Conference Report, 4 April 1933.

4 Heber J. Grant Journal, 30 September 1890; First Presidency Office Journal, 2 October 1889. Minutes of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 22 February & 1 March 1911 & 23 January 1914.

5 He copied it on 3 August 1909.

6 See D&C 132:3-4,6,21,27,32; Revelation to Wilford Woodruff, 26 January 1880, Unpublished Revelations 79:32; Revelations to John Taylor, 25 June 1882 & September 1886, Unpublished Revelations 80:21-22 & 8:7-8.



would also turn to actual persecution. In 1935 the Utah legislature made “unlawful cohabitation” a felony for the first time, punishable by up to 5 years in prison (even the anti-polygamous territorial law had made it only a misdemeanor). This law was drafted by Hugh B. Brown (LDS Stake President, and later an Apostle), undoubtedly with the approval of the Church.

In 1944, husbands were taken from their wives and children from their mothers without there ever being any evidence of abuse, but simply for the crime of believing and practicing what they believed to be celestial plural marriage. The world was shocked and horrified at the images of innocent children being torn from their loving families, and the actions were almost universally condemned – except by the Church and its Deseret News which applauded the raids and court cases.<sup>1</sup>

In the middle of May 1945, some of those men who believed they were clinging to early Mormon doctrines, and whose families the Church had once encouraged in living their way of life, were put in jail, and the last hope of Heber J. Grant was fulfilled in which he said, “I shall rejoice when the Government officials put a few of these [polygamists] in the county jail or the state penitentiary.”<sup>2</sup> His joy though, was short lived, as he died the next day. His legacy being that he had ended his life fighting against the very thing which his father and others risked their lives to keep alive.

It is hard to imagine what could have prompted President Grant to change his views and attitudes so completely against the very principle he was born into, and which all Church Presidents before him had been persecuted because of. Perhaps a statement he made in 1938 may give some clue as to what swayed his mind. He stated in the November of that year that he found his “greatest happiness” “in the good will and friendship” from “all classes of people”

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1 See Salt Lake Tribune, 8 March 1944.

2 27 November 1928, Letter to Joseph W. Musser (original in the possession of Ivan Neilson).

and denominations, instead of “persecution and bitterness.”<sup>1</sup> To some this statement may seem harmless enough, but we see it in its true light when we compare it to a warning given almost half a century earlier by Brigham Young – “When the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have apostatized and joined hands with the wicked, and never until then; which I pray may never come.”<sup>2</sup>

This change has since been praised by subsequent Church leaders such as Elder John J. Carmack, who related his happiness that, “During his tenure, President Heber J. Grant moved us into the modern era. We were no longer in isolation. We became a part of the world, the business community, the intellectual community. That was a major corner that we turned.”<sup>3</sup> How quickly it seems that we have forgotten the words of Jesus that “friendship with the world is enmity with God.”<sup>4</sup>

The approval and acceptance of the world is an intoxicating thing, and led not only to the Church giving up plural marriage, but to many other principles and questionable actions. To give a few examples:

In 1921 Grant authorized a change in Priesthood ordination, to remove the conferral of the Priesthood,<sup>5</sup> which directly conflicted with instructions given by his predecessor, Joseph F. Smith, given in 1901.<sup>6</sup>

This was not the only such change. Two years later, the garment was substantially changed,<sup>7</sup> in direct opposition to strict instructions President Smith have a only a few years earlier, that any such alterations would invalidate the garment completely.<sup>8</sup> According to one account, Heber Grant reasoned

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1 Salt Lake Tribune, 22 Nov 1938. See also Conference Report, Apr. 4, 1920, p. 12.

2 Brigham Young - J.D. 4:327, see 10:273.

3 Elder John J. Carmack, Church News, Jan. 13, 1990.

4 James 4:4.

5 23 April 1921. This is changed back 36 years later.

6 Improvement Era 4:394.

7 14 June 1923.

8 Improvement Era 9, June 1916: 812.

that, “the changes in the garment were neither by revelation nor inspiration, but to please the sisters, and encourage the young people to go through the Temple.”<sup>1</sup> This was followed a few years later by several changes in the temple ceremony itself, and in the administration and meaning of the highest ordinance, the Second Anointing.<sup>2</sup>

Not content with altering the ordinances of the temple, in 1923 President Grant mortgaged the temple and put it in the hands of the world in order to support a sugar business! To take out a \$30 million loan (for fifty years) he used Temple Square as collateral.<sup>3</sup>

Brother Heber also taught a new doctrine, that we should follow Church leaders even if they may be wrong, and we will still be blessed for it. Even though he himself had once taught that “Next to the committing of sin, there is no more fruitful cause of apostasy among the Latter-day Saints than when we put our trust in the arm of flesh.”<sup>4</sup> Yet he told a young Marion G. Romney that, “My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it.”<sup>5</sup>

It seems that more changes in the Church occurred during his tenure than any other Church President, nearly all of them to remove by policy what previous prophets had established by revelation. This biography may seem overly negative about Heber J. Grant, but it has been written to show that whatever qualifications he had as a businessman, that as a

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1 See “Read it and weep” tape/pamphlet, Salt Lake Tribune, 4 June 1923 & George F. Richards & others to the First Pres. and Twelve, 22 Apr. 1936.

2 See David John Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness*, p. 157 & 164

3 Salt Lake County Recorder's Office, Deed No. 501, 787, Bk. 11 U, page 440, dated Nov. 19, 1923, and recorded Nov. 21, 1923. Issued by Heber J. Grant, Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Two other deeds followed: #501,790 and #502,184 also issued by Heber J. Grant. Despite this legal documentation, President Grant publicly denied it had occurred – *Deseret News*, 4 April 1936.

4 Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, p. 31.

5 Conference Report, October 1960, p. 78.

Prophet he has been found wanting. Yet if we are to look for the true successor of Joseph F. Smith, one who stood against the world and stood up for true principles despite persecution, then we need to look elsewhere.

Nevertheless, we must remember that the Lord must have called Heber J. Grant for a reason. There are many good things he did during his administration, such as the welfare program, and of course the Church members generally also bear some responsibility for the course the Church took at the time, as so many wanted the changes that occurred, and President Grant to some extent was acting on their behalf. There are many statements he made as an Apostle that we would do well to follow (and we can only wish he had followed himself):

“No matter what restrictions we may be placed under by men, our only consistent course is to keep the commandments of God. We should, in this regard, place ourselves in the same position as that of the three Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace. ... we have but one choice, that is to abide in the law of God, no matter as to the consequence.”<sup>1</sup>

### **List of Changes Under Grant's Presidency**

Plural Marriage ended (within the Church) completely

Consecration ended completely

(replaced with welfare program)

Priesthood conferral and ordination changed

Holy Garments changed

Temple mortgaged – Church in bondage to world

World ceases persecution

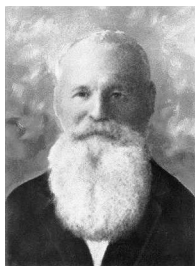
Persecuted Polygamists persecuted (aided by the Church)

Taught follow Church President even if wrong

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<sup>1</sup> Heber J. Grant, Deseret News, Apr. 6, 1885.

## John W. Woolley – Profile of a Prophet



|      |                                                  |
|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1831 | Born John Wickersham Woolley                     |
| 1837 | Parents join the LDS Church                      |
| 1840 | Receives Patriarchal Blessing ( <i>age 8</i> )   |
| 1846 | Drove teams to Winter Quarters ( <i>age 14</i> ) |
| 1848 | Drove teams to Salt Lake City ( <i>age 16</i> )  |
| 1851 | Marries Julia Ensign                             |
| 1860 | Brings Saints across the plains                  |
| 1886 | Ordained an Apostle by John Taylor               |
|      | Marries Anne Everington                          |
| 1910 | Marries Annie Fisher                             |
| 1913 | Called as Stake Patriarch                        |
| 1914 | Excommunicated from LDS Church                   |
| 1918 | Became President of the Priesthood               |
| 1928 | Dies ( <i>age 97</i> )                           |

John Wickersham Woolley was born to Edwin D. and Mary W. Woolley (the first of Edwin's seven wives) in Newlin, Columbia, Pennsylvania on the 30th of December 1831. His father was originally a Quaker farmer, but he was converted to Mormonism in 1837. He would later become Brigham Young's business manager, as well as one of his closest friends, and a Bishop from 1853 to 1881.

Little did his parents know at his birth the important role he would yet fulfill in the history of the Gospel, and that he would one day be a Patriarch, Apostle, Prophet, President of the Priesthood, Successor to Joseph F. Smith, father of a future Prophet, uncle to Church President Spencer W. Kimball, and Apostles J. Reuben Clark and John W. Taylor, as well as being father-in-law to B.H. Roberts, President of the Seventy.

One of John's earliest memories was that of sitting on the Prophet Joseph's knee. Even at eight years old he was considered sufficiently prepared to receive his Patriarchal Blessing from Joseph Smith Sr, the Presiding Patriarch. In it he was promised he would “be called to responsible stations,” that it would involve having to “receive keys,” as well as “glory and honor” and “worlds of knowledge and power”, and that he would one day “be called the Lord's anointed.”

He was chosen to cross the plains with Brigham Young's group of pioneers. In his Blessing as a boy, it had said he would "yet travel among the mountains of the west" and "bring the sons of Ephraim to the lands of their inheritance." In fulfillment of this, he was among the first to meet the handcart companies in 1856, and in 1860 and 1863 he brought emigrants across the plains himself. On the last occasion Joseph F. Smith acted as the chaplain in his 'company', and they became lifelong friends, with President Smith having picnics with the Woolley family and speaking at his wife's funeral.

John Woolley held many responsible civil stations, such as Constable, Justice of the Peace, Deputy Sheriff, Deputy Territorial Marshal, and County Commissioner. Within the Nauvoo Legion (in the territory of Deseret) he served as a Lieutenant, Captain, Sergeant and Major. He participated in the Black Hawk War, and was one of the ten who crossed the Little Mountain to meet Johnston's Army in 1857.

Having been ordained a High Priest by Brigham Young, he served on a Bishopric, as a High Councillor in the Davis Stake, and was later ordained a Patriarch. He also was an ordinance worker in the Salt Lake Temple, and he opened General Conference with prayer on more than one occasion. He was sealed to his first wife Julia E. Sirls in March 1851, and was Endowed at the same time. He went on later to marry Ann Everington in 1886, and in 1910 married Annie Fisher, with Joseph F. Smith performing the ceremony.

When John Taylor was in hiding there were very few homes in which he felt his safety was secure, and very few people in whom he placed his confidence<sup>1</sup>. John Woolley was one of these men, and his son Lorin acted as a messenger and sometimes a bodyguard for President John Taylor. It was in John Woolley's home that Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith

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1 Martha Hughes Cannon (the first U.S. female senator, wife of Angus M. Cannon, Pres. of Salt Lake Stake) also hid at the Woolley home, after the birth of her daughter Elizabeth Rachel, whilst her husband was in hiding for living plural marriage.

visited President Taylor on the night of September 26th, 1886, and on the following day set five men apart (including John, his son, and George Q. Cannon) as Apostles, with a special commission to keep alive Celestial Plural Marriage, and the authority to set apart others similarly.<sup>1</sup>

As John Taylor had prophesied, Woolley was cut off from the Church for performing the mission he had been called to, as were many of those who kept their covenant to keep alive God's laws after the Church had abandoned them. But he continued to carry out this mission under the direction of those who presided over him<sup>2</sup> until just before the death of Joseph F. Smith in 1918.<sup>3</sup> After President Smith's life ended, the responsibility fell upon Woolley (he being the most senior Apostle worthy and willing to keep alive all of the Gospel) of presiding over those keys and ordinances that the Church had rejected, just as his Patriarchal Blessing had predicted.

After John W. Woolley's death in 1928, his son Lorin succeeded him as President of the Priesthood, and to see that the work of God continued, he called Apostles to ensure the fullness of Priesthood remained upon the earth, and its ordinances in the manner God had restored them to Joseph originally. This authority has continued to the present day.

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- 1 Within a couple of weeks of this he married the widowed mother of B.H. Roberts.
  - 2 17 November 1909 - Anthony W. Ivins sends Warren Longhurt & Eva Allred to John Woolley to perform their plural marriage ceremony. ("A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Mary Evelyn Clark Allred," *Star of Truth* 2:301-2).
  - 3 "John told me that within two months of President Smith's death [1918] President Smith told him to go ahead in his mission of sealing plural marriages." (Edwin D. Woolley Jr. Reminiscence dictated to Elizabeth Woolley Jensen, March 1920)

## Comparison of Heber J. Grant & John W. Woolley

### Similarities

Heber J. Grant

John W. Woolley

Called by John Taylor

Ordained an Apostle

Required to live Plural Marriage

### Differences

Heber J. Grant

John W. Woolley

Never knew Joseph Smith

Knew Joseph as a child and  
as resurrected being

Ordained by  
George Q. Cannon

Ordained by John Taylor  
personally

Failed to perpetuate  
plural marriage  
after the Manifesto

Continued to perpetuate  
plural marriage  
after the Manifesto

Tried to change ordinances  
and laws

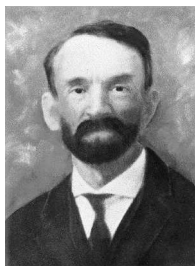
Kept ordinances  
and laws alive

Sought friendship  
with the world

Persecuted by the world &  
Church



## Lorin C. Woolley



|         |                                      |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 1856    | Born Lorin Calvin Woolley            |
| 1872    | Ordained an Elder ( <i>age 16</i> )  |
| 1883    | Marries first wife Sarah Ann Roberts |
| 1886    | Ordained Apostle by John Taylor      |
| 1887-89 | Mission to Southern States           |
| 1896-97 | Mission to Indian Territories        |
| 1924    | Excommunicated for beliefs           |
| 1928    | Becomes President of the Priesthood  |
| 1934    | Dies ( <i>age 77</i> )               |

*From a biography written by Kathleen Lavery:*

Lorin Calvin Woolley was born in Salt Lake City on October the 23 of 1856. He was one of the younger sons of John W. Woolley and Julia S. Ensign. His mother had two other sons and three daughters. When Lorin was seven years old he moved to Centerville with his family, where he attended Davis County schools and worked on his father's farm. On October 18, 1868 he was baptized by his father, John W. Woolley, and on January 5, 1883, he married Sarah Ann Roberts in the Endowment House.

Like his father, John W. Woolley, he also became actively engaged in protecting the General Authorities, and many times delivered important messages of the brethren.

As a young man he was a herdsman. Many members of the Church owned cattle which had been placed in charge of private owners who would care for them in order that the government and enemies would not confiscate them with other Church properties which, at that time were being taken. It was after he had been herding cattle on the range that he was appointed to help guard President Taylor who was then in hiding at his (Lorin's) father's home.

Wonderful and thrilling are the stories of his experiences on the "Underground". He and other witnesses, including his friends and family, have preserved these accounts, relating them many times. As a close guard and

messenger of John Taylor, he was sent into the “dens” and the strongholds of the enemy to spy out their plans and threats, bringing back very exact reports of their plotting. Thus the sinister efforts of the opposition were thwarted many times. Indeed, it was upon the completion of one such dangerous mission of helping to hide some of the brethren that Lorin was immediately called upon again by John Taylor to act as a guard on the evening of September 26, 1886, when the Savior and Joseph Smith visited President John Taylor. Though Lorin had been in the saddle for the most part of three days, John Taylor promised him strength and energy to effectively stand guard. As the account suggests, a special purpose motivated this request. It was the next day that Lorin Woolley, with his father and George Q. Cannon, Samuel Bateman and Charles Wilcken, were called to be members of the Council of Friends. But Lorin's preparation, which qualified him for this high and holy calling, began much earlier at a very young age. ...

For years he jealously guarded the lives of the brethren, and more than once offered his own life for their safety. Both he and his father, it is stated on indisputable evidence, were among those favored ones who received the personal ministration of the Savior. He, with his father, was a close confidant of the Prophets Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith, and his home, on many occasions welcomed and shielded those of the Saints who were driven into hiding for the truth's sake.”<sup>1</sup>

As a deeply spiritual worker in the Kingdom of God, Lorin was very receptive to the impressions of the Spirit. At one time in 1886 he related to John Taylor a remarkable vision which he had had.

Another example of Lorin's keen spiritual depth was related by members in his family. One of his children had been given a wonderful offer for education in the Philippines. However, before going to Manila, Lorin's counsel was sought. In reply he warned against the trip, foretelling that very soon there was going to be very serious trouble in the country. The trip was canceled and shortly afterwards the Japanese attacked

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1 Truth magazine 2:122.

Pearl Harbor, and the Philippines were quickly engulfed in the conflict. ...

The meeting in Centerville in 1886 was of such importance and sacredness that Lorin Woolley related it many times to his family. This fact was verified by his own children and others who had lived in the home.

Shortly after the meeting of 1886, Lorin was sent on a mission to Indian Territory where he served from 1887 to 1889 and again later, the following December 1896 to April 1897. While on the first of these missions, the following interesting and significant event occurred:

While on his mission in the Indian Territory at the age of thirty, Lorin C. Woolley became seriously sick and his life was despaired of. His missionary companion had no faith in his recovery.

He had been very sick for some days. When in this condition four personages came to his room and stood by his bed. He was lying with his head to the north, the foot of the bed being to the south. These personages stood from left to right, from the way he was lying. The first one he did not know; the second was Joseph Smith the third Brigham Young, and the fourth John Taylor; all of whom had left this sphere of existence.

Some years previous, Brigham Young had blessed Brother Woolley and made certain promises to him ... After that President John Taylor, having chosen Brother Woolley for a very hazardous undertaking which greatly endangered his life, and which contemplated his coming to Salt Lake and getting a certain man who was an official of the Church out of the city, away from the United States officers who were at that time surrounding the house, and giving Brother Woolley a promise, which was, "You shall yet live to become great and mighty in the Church and Kingdom of God."

These persons were discussing Brother Woolley's condition. It seems that his grandfather, Bishop Edwin D. Woolley, wanted him in the Spirit World to help perform a certain work and in anticipation of this want, Brother Woolley was supposed to be on his death-bed. John Taylor and

Brigham Young were pleading his cause, saying that certain promises had been made to him, and he was clinging to those promises.

He had previously told the Elders who administered to him, but who had no faith in his recovery, that he would recover, because he had had certain promises made to him that had not yet been fulfilled. He knew that he would get well.

It was this subject that was being discussed between the four personages. Brother Woolley heard the discussion. The Elders in the room did not hear it, but they felt impressed with what they later described as the presence of angels or heavenly beings.

The argument was, Brother Edwin D. Woolley wants him on the other side and the answer was, that we have made certain promises to him that he is clinging to. Finally the question was asked, "Hasn't Brother Woolley someone else he can use as well as Lorin?" The answer was, "Yes, Bert (Henry Alberta Woolley, a son of Edwin D. Woolley) he is qualified and can do the work." Finally the personage Brother Woolley did not know definitely, but whom he assumed to be the Lord Jesus Christ, turned to Joseph Smith and told him to take this other man and leave Brother Woolley here.

Joseph Smith then instructed John Taylor along similar lines. John Taylor then went around the brethren over to the head of the bed, and placed his hands on Brother Woolley, which he felt, and said, "It is all right, Lorin." Lorin looked up and asked, "Boss, who is that other party?" and as he looked around while asking the question, the three had also disappeared. Then as he looked in the direction of John Taylor, whose hands had been upon his head, he had disappeared, and that was the end of the vision.

Brother Woolley immediately arose and was healed. Those who were in the room said that they felt the presence of heavenly beings and hear Brother Woolley talk and ask questions, but they did not hear the voices of the heavenly beings.

Aunt Sally Mabey, in whose house he was at the time, said, "Why, Lorin, you were talking to angels!" She rejoiced

to think of angels being in her house. She was part Cherokee Indian.”<sup>1</sup>

Of Brother Lorin Woolley's Christlike character, a great many personal friends and family members have testified. In gathering of some of the saints one time, B. Harvey Allred, former Speaker of the House in Idaho, and himself a very spiritual man, was praising and complimenting Lorin Woolley publicly when Brother Woolley immediately requested him to quit exalting him.

Lorin Woolley was a common appearing man, humble and unassuming. He was a forceful speaker, often very outspoken and blunt. Often he knew your question before it was asked and often answered by asking you a question which answered your inquiry. How often he told Saints to never be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for there was nothing in it to produce shame. He bore a strong testimony of his vows and that after Joseph F. Smith's death, “It was time to take the lid off.”

Because of Lorin Woolley's true greatness, some began to think he was more than he was. But in reply, Lorin said, “I am not the One Mighty and Strong, I am not the David of the Last Days, I am not the Marred Servant, etc. I am just Lorin C. Woolley, and have been set apart to keep Plural Marriage alive.” ...

Being a man of great faith he was once asked why he was not healed of a limp he had after an accident in his younger years. He said the Lord had let him know it was to keep him humble.

On September 19, 1934, almost six years after the death of his father, Lorin C. Woolley died, at the age of 77:

“At his funeral the speakers, consisting of Elder Joseph E. Williams of the Bishopric, Governor Henry H. Blood, and Bishop Wesley E. Tingey, among other things, expressed the following thoughts:

That John W. Woolley, father of the deceased, would go on as a Patriarch of his family throughout the Patriarchal order in the New and Everlasting covenant of marriage, as

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1 Truth magazine 16:319-20.

well as having lived all other principles of the Gospel, as revealed, to the best of their knowledge. The speakers lauded Lorin as a ‘neighbor and friend and a builder of the commonwealth.’ No request was ever made of him for help that he did not respond to liberally. Lorin had taken two missions, the speakers said, ‘and don’t tell me he will lose any of his reward. He did not go out for dollars and cents, but for the glory of God.’ The wives and children were admonished to walk in the principles of salvation as Lorin had done and had taught them to do.”<sup>1</sup>

Many bare record of the conflicting reports concerning his teachings. He was called a liar and faced even the written venom of some in the Church. Those who knew him and loved him were inspired and encouraged by him and his testimonies and forceful teachings of the gospel. One of his favorite songs was “Awake Ye Defenders of Zion.” The contradictions were due to people’s attitudes. Both the Prophet Joseph and Lorin Woolley had vile lies told about them, but also very precious things have so often been retold. His testimony was, “I Know that my Redeemer Lives, for I have seen and talked with Him.”<sup>2</sup>

“About 4 p.m. met my dear friend and brother Lorin C. Woolley on the street. He had been to see me and finding me out of the office had left. As I was driving in my car I saw him and felt impressed to stop. We repaired to the office, and he, under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, told me many wonderful things, some of which I record here: He had met the Savior, Brigham Young and John Taylor, since the death of the two latter, also Joseph Smith, and had heard the voice of his father since his death. Joseph Smith and John Taylor had visited him at his father’s home before his father’s death and after he had been ‘handled’ by the Church, and he was comforted and instructed to ‘carry on.’”

31 March 1930, *Book of Remembrance*, Joseph Musser, p. 55.

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1 Truth magazine 2:122.

2 “I know that my Redeemer lives, for I have seen Him.” – Lorin Woolley, Sworn testimony of Olive K. Neilson, 15 December 1964.

## J. Leslie Broadbent



|      |                                      |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1891 | Born Joseph Leslie Broadbent         |
| 1910 | Fulfills mission to England          |
| 1915 | Marries first wife                   |
| 1925 | Marries second wife                  |
| 1929 | Ordained an Apostle by Lorin Woolley |
| 1929 | Set apart as Second Elder            |
| 1934 | Becomes President of the Priesthood  |
| 1935 | Dies of Pneumonia ( <i>age 43</i> )  |

*From short biography by anonymous author:*

Joseph Leslie Broadbent was born June 3, 1891 at Lehi, Utah. He was the son of Joseph Sr., and Amanda Tweede. His mother was born in Denmark and his father was born in Lehi, Utah. His mother died in childbirth when J. Leslie was twelve years of age. There had been three girls and four boys in the family. After his mother's death, his father remarried and by this marriage they had a number of other children.

Joseph attended B.Y.U. and Steven-Heneger College. He was mid-western States salesman for Baldwin Radio Co., and also worked for years for Dundee Clothing Co., of Salt Lake City. He filled a mission to England, leaving his home in 1910.

He was a tall, well-proportioned man; handsome, with a quiet, soft voice. He was a very tactful person and of a very noble bearing. He was very precise in all he did, was extremely neat, refined, and a genuine gentleman. He was a man of immaculate appearance and with such poise and congeniality that he was often envied by other people.

He was taught the fullness of the Gospel by his much loved father-in-law, Lewis A. Kelsch Sr., who was author of the Church's first Ready Reference Book. Brother Broadbent's home was always open to the Saints, and proved a place of comfort, genuine hospitality, and a refuge for many who sought peace, quiet, and a place of protection from enemies of

the fullness of the Gospel. Many sacred ordinances and many patriarchal blessings were given in this home and many gatherings of Saints to talk or hear Gospel subjects.

He was excommunicated while President of the Elders Quorum, after which he was placed under a great deal of pressure. He was helpful in getting the Jensen-Ballard Correspondence published, and he also helped in the compilation of the first book on Celestial Marriage by Broadbent and Musser. He married his first wife, Rula Kelsch, in 1915, Fawn Jessop on October 27, 1925; later he married Irene Locket and Anna Kmetsch.

*Excerpts from “The Life and Teachings of J. Leslie Broadbent” by James Harding:*

Leslie often visited with Lorin Woolley at Lorin’s home in Centerville. Many hours were spent discussing gospel principles with Lorin, Louis Kelsch, John Y. Barlow and others involved. A variety of locations were also used. These included The Baldwin Radio Plant in East Mill Creek, the mezzanine level of the Kenyon Hotel on 200 South in Salt Lake City, Leslie’s home, and various offices the Brethren pooled their money together to rent in the Atlas building on 200 South between Main and West Temple.

John W. Woolley died in December of 1928, leaving his son, Lorin, standing alone, the last of five men called in 1886. Although some sources say that Lorin was simply inspired to call several men because he felt he needed help, the majority of evidence points to a direct revelation:

“In 1929 Lorin received a visit from his father who told him to call men to fill the quorum of High Priest Apostles. Lorin had many visits with his father during the next few years. He told Louis (Kelsch) and others that when his father first appeared to him after his death, he was the same old man as when he died; but each time he came back he looked younger until during his last visit he looked as young as when he was a



‘dancing master’ in Nauvoo. John W. Woolley told Lorin to call Leslie Broadbent and John Y. Barlow. He was told to ordain Leslie first and John second. Both were ordained March 6, 1929.”

Leslie’s wife Rula was present at the ordination. She recalls:

“The night that he was set apart I was there. Leslie said, ‘Are you sure you want me first? John’s older and more experienced.’ He (Lorin) said ‘Leslie, if I’d wanted him first I would have said so.’ He said ‘It’s got to go the way it’s to go. I’ve been instructed.’”

Lorin went on to ordain Leslie and then John. He would ordain four more men to that council. Joseph W. Musser on May 15, 1929; Charles F. Zitting on July 22, 1932; Dr. LeGrande Woolley on July 22, 1932; and Louis A. Kelsch Jr. on January 26, 1933.

Leslie became very close to Lorin Woolley over the years of his involvement with the Priesthood work. Prior to his death, Lorin became very ill, and as senior member of the Council, it fell to Leslie to run the affairs of the Priesthood.

Although he had already been given the fulness of the Priesthood and was the senior member of the newly organized Council, he would yet receive another ordination at the hands of Lorin. On May 15, 1929, he was ordained 2nd Elder of the Priesthood on earth. He didn’t tell Rula about it until several days after the event. This action confirmed Leslie’s position as the probable successor to Lorin Woolley.

Leslie attended the School of the Prophets under Lorin Woolley. The most important events of the last few meetings were recorded by Charles F. Zitting:

“Before President Lorin C. Woolley passed away he instructed us of the Priesthood Council in gospel doctrines, endowments, ordinances and all essentials pertaining to this holy calling. ... We met once a week,

on Thursday evenings. About two months before we completed our work, a messenger from heaven visited Brother Woolley and told him the time was short and we would have to meet twice a week in order to complete our work. This messenger was John W. Woolley, who held the keys of Priesthood before his son, Lorin C. Woolley.

Therefore, we met twice a week and I remember well the night we finished our work, it was a very solemn occasion. After finishing, Brother Lorin C. Woolley arose and said to Brother J. Leslie Broadbent, who was next in seniority in this Priesthood Council, ‘Brother Leslie, you are to me as Oliver Cowdery was to the Prophet Joseph Smith, before Oliver Cowdery apostatized. You are second Elder to me and you are now to take charge until I come.’

As he said this the tears streamed from his eyes and we were all in tears. Little did we realize that this was the last time that Brother Lorin C. Woolley would be with us, but he must have known it. Soon after this meeting he had a stroke and was confined to his home in Centerville until his death a few months later.”

Joseph Musser remembers the passing of Lorin Woolley this way:

“Wednesday 19, 11:30 A.M. Lorin C. Woolley past on, after a lingering sickness of about 10 months and a critical sickness of about two months. In his passing, God summoned home the President of Priesthood and who held the keys to the Patriarchal Order. Upon him as a thin thread the Priesthood rested, with its keys from late in 1928 to February or March 1929, when J.L. Broadbent and John Y. Barlow, who had been called to the Priesthood Council were ordained to the same order of Priesthood held by Lorin. The Keys and powers fall upon Bro. Broadbent who had be designated the Second Elder by Lorin ten months

previously.”

This left Leslie as head of the Priesthood body, filling the position mentioned in D&C 107. Joseph Musser expected to see many changes under Leslie’s administration. However, Leslie stuck to the rules laid down under Lorin Woolley. It was not until after Leslie’s death that organization and changes took place under John Y. Barlow.

One of the most famous stories about Leslie relates to Lorin’s passing. Shortly before Lorin’s death he is reported as having said, “I don’t want to be separated very long from Leslie.” This request was granted. Leslie also knew of his passing.

Prior to his death, Leslie made some amazing prophecies with reference to his passing and to future persecutions such as the Short Creek raids. They are recorded this way:

“Though at the time he admitted he was in good health, he felt certain that this would be the last time the Saints would hear him speak to them. He pled with the Saints to cease from their follies, repent of their justifying themselves in any known sin, or else they would be broken up as a people, scattered and many would suffer from their enemies; that if persons were imprisoned they would be able to see they had, for the more part, brought upon themselves their troubles by ‘not minding their own business’ and flaunting their affairs in such a way as to dare their enemies of the principle.”

These prophecies were fulfilled to the letter. Many men, women and children suffered because of the wrong doings and indiscretions of others who were poor examples of Celestial Marriage.

Leslie’s last recorded action as head of the Priesthood was recorded by Charles F. Zitting:

“Not long after the passing of Apostle Lorin C. Woolley, Pres. J. Leslie Broadbent, at a School of the Prophets, took lead in a prayer circle wherein we all offered our lives to God for the establishment of the principles of salvation in the world, which included plural or Celestial Marriage. This was Brother Broadbent’s last meeting with us. A day or two later, he contracted pneumonia and died.”

As senior member of the Priesthood Council, John Y. Barlow was the next in line as President of the Priesthood and he took charge when Leslie died. He had been ordained on the same day as Leslie by Lorin C. Woolley. On the day of Leslie’s funeral, Joseph Musser wrote:

“The spirit of leadership is resting upon John Y. Barlow, and he will ‘carry on’ under the direction of heaven.”

## John Y. Barlow



|      |                                               |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1874 | Born John Yeates Barlow                       |
| 1895 | Serves mission to North-Western States        |
| 1897 | Serves mission to Eastern States / is married |
| 1902 | Marries first plural wife                     |
| 1918 | Serves mission to North-Western States        |
| 1919 | Excommunicated for beliefs                    |
| 1929 | Ordained an Apostle                           |
| 1934 | Helps establish Short Creek community         |
| 1935 | Leads Priesthood Work                         |
| 1942 | United Order in Short Creek begun             |
| 1944 | Arrested for living Plural Marriage           |
| 1949 | Dies ( <i>age 75</i> )                        |

John Yeates Barlow was born in Lincoln County, Nevada, to Israel Barlow and his English-born wife Hannah Yeates.<sup>1</sup> He grew up on his father's farm in Davis County, Utah.

He married for the first time in 1897 and took his first plural wife in 1902, the second in 1918, and the third in 1923.<sup>2</sup>

While serving as a missionary for the LDS Church in 1918, he defended his polygamous views and was released early.<sup>3</sup> Later, LDS Church apostle Melvin J. Ballard, who had been the president of the Northwest States Mission during Barlow's service there, served as witness in the disciplinary council that resulted in Barlow's excommunication.<sup>4</sup>

He was ordained an Apostle by Lorin Woolley on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1929, and subsequently helped start the Short Creek community in 1934. Along with several other men, he was arrested for living Plural Marriage in March 1944.

Due to Barlow's seniority in the 'Council of Friends' he led the Priesthood Work upon J. Leslie Broadbent's death in 1935.

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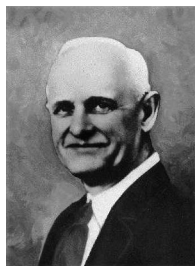
1 1880 census, Davis Co., Utah, T9-1336, p. 303D.

2 Joseph W. Musser Journals, 19 March 1935.

3 Morris Q. Kunz, *Reminiscences on Priesthood*, p. 21.

4 LeRoy S. Johnson Sermons 1:61.

## Joseph W. Musser



|      |                                                  |
|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1872 | Born in Salt Lake City                           |
| 1892 | Married in Logan temple                          |
| 1893 | Ordained Seventy (16 <sup>th</sup> Quorum)       |
| 1895 | Began serving mission in Alabama                 |
| 1899 | Receives Second Anointing                        |
| 1901 | Made Pres. of 105 <sup>th</sup> Q. of Seventy    |
| 1902 | Married to first plural wife                     |
| 1903 | High Councillor in Uintah Stake                  |
| 1906 | Branch President of Duchesne branch              |
| 1907 | High Councillor in Granite Stake                 |
| 1909 | Meeting before Quorum of Twelve                  |
| 1915 | Given authority to seal by Apostle               |
| 1921 | Excommunicated from LDS Church                   |
| 1929 | Ordained Apostle by Lorin C. Woolley             |
| 1945 | Sent to penitentiary (released 15 Dec)           |
| 1949 | Barlow dies, Joseph Musser presides <sup>1</sup> |
| 1954 | Dies (age 82)                                    |

*Biography from “Most Holy Principle”, Volume 4:*

Joseph White Musser joins our group of contemporary witnesses as an outstanding example of a servant of God. He was born March 8, 1872, in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Amos Milton Musser, Assistant Church Historian and pillar of the Church, and Mary Elizabeth White, first plural wife to Brother Musser.

Joseph White Musser was born and grew to manhood at a time when the Church was at war with the government of the United States. Plural marriage had been declared a crime, and the most respected men in Mormondom were being hunted down and cast into prison. Joseph often used to relate to his friends his experiences of taking plural wives from one house to another to evade the federal officers. He saw his father, with whom Joseph's life was closely interwoven, often

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<sup>1</sup> The life of Musser and the history of Mormon Fundamentalism from this point will be covered in a future volume.

driven into hiding. It was under this environment that young Joseph was raised. He had at least met, if not personally known, every Church president except the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was a man of great refinement, knowledge and experience.

We name Brother Musser as a unique witness especially because of his vantage point of close association with the Church leaders. He knew the inner workings of that body of men.

Referring to his religious background and the reasons for his acceptance of the principle of plural marriage, he stated:

“I had been nurtured in the Patriarchal Law. I believe it earnestly. It seemed to me I had met Father Abraham and been taught at his knees. He had many wives and concubines. Isaac, the son of Sarah, was Abraham's heir apparent, though not his first born, Ishmael coming before him.

Early in life I became familiar with the Lord's revelations to His Prophet, Joseph Smith, on the subject of marriage. My father had four wives to my knowledge; though one, the first, I never knew in mortality. She died before my birth. My mother was his first plural wife, and her faith and loyalty were, to my mind, perfect.

Coming from such an ancestry and being raised in a polygamous atmosphere, by parents devoted to their religious conceptions, I naturally inherited and imbibed a strong spiritual nature. From early youth I devoted my time to the Church. I believed intensely in the mission of Joseph Smith, and were it possible to become fanatical in accepting the decrees of the Almighty, I have been fanatically religious, but not obdurate toward the religion and actions of others nor offensively dogmatic.

Personally, I was brought up in the most puritanical fashion with reference to morality. To lose

one's virtue was an offense in the eyes of God next to murder – the shedding of innocent blood. To take advantage of a girl, not one's wife, was a terrible act. I believed this doctrine and I lived it completely – and I still believe it.”

As to his recollection of meeting the early presidents of the Church, he often related his experience of seeing President Brigham Young as he lay in his coffin; also that he vaguely remembered seeing him before his death. Later when old enough to remember and understand, his father invited him to attend a meeting of the “Grand Council of the Kingdom of God.” He remembered this meeting, of how armed guards admitted the invited guests. His father, Amos Milton Musser, being a member of this “Grand Council,” was free to invite him to attend. At this meeting he was introduced to President John Taylor and heard him speak.

He remembered the placing of the capstone on the Salt Lake Temple. He said Apostle Lorenzo Snow led the open air congregation in the ‘Hosanna Shout.’ A week later, April 13, 1892, he ascended the east middle tower of the Temple and touched the feet of the golden Angel Moroni.

Joseph W. Musser's schooling opportunities in those early days were minimal, though through self-teaching and the generous application of sheer will and determination, he became an efficient court stenographer and developed valuable knowledge in the field of law.

At the age of 20, Joseph was married for time and all eternity in the Logan Temple. Three years later, in 1895, he received a call from President Woodruff to fill a mission to the Southern States. He was set apart by Apostles Brigham Young Jr., Heber J. Grant and John W. Taylor. He filled his mission without purse or scrip.

While serving on his mission and in concern over the health of his firstborn, a son, he inquired of the Lord as to the welfare of his child. The Lord gave him a dream in which he visited his home and saw his child in improved health, with reassurances given him from his beloved wife. Brother Musser



praised the Lord for His kindness in answer to prayer.

In 1899, now home from his mission, a wonderful and marvelous experience came to him, which was destined to change the course of his life for time and all eternity. Speaking of this incident, he recorded the following in his Journal:

“Receiving a written invitation from President Lorenzo Snow, to receive my ‘Higher Anointings’ in the Temple, my wife and I, with four other couples repaired to the Temple on Thanksgiving morning, November 1899, where the most glorious blessings known to man were sealed upon us. We literally spent a few hours as in heaven ‘mid the glorious calm and quiet of our holy surroundings. We were near the Lord and Oh! how happy! I was only 27 years of age and wondered why so young a person should be so favored, for we were being sealed with the ‘Holy Spirit of Promise.’”

Following on the heels of this glorious blessing, word came from President Lorenzo Snow which was of a shocking nature. Explaining the situation, Brother Joseph gave the following account:

“When the Wilford Woodruff Manifesto was adopted (October 1890), I was not married. I had been promised in the name of the Lord, by my Stake President, some days after the Manifesto was published, that I would yet enter the law. I believed it. And later, while courting my young lady, I told her I expected to enter that law of marriage, that when the time came I would take it up with her and we would make the selection of other wives together. Although I was taking her out of a plural family, she took the matter coolly, but she was true to her promise on that occasion.

In December 1899, after receiving my ‘Second Blessings,’ a messenger came to me from President

Snow, stating I had been selected to enter plural marriage and to help keep the principle alive. Apprising my wife of the situation, we both entered into prayer for guidance. At this time I hadn't the slightest idea whom to approach. The 'Manifesto' had been issued, and word had gone out from Bishops and Stake Presidencies that a definite stop had been put to the practice. Those assuming to enter the principle would be 'handled.' I was placed in a peculiar situation. God's Prophet told me to accept the law and keep it alive. His subordinates said if I did so, they would cut me off the Church. I could not argue with them and divulge the source of my authority. It was a time when every man was in honor bound to carry his own burdens and yet live every law of the Gospel.

In answer to prayer, Mary Caroline Hill, a daughter of William Hood Hill, a member of the Mill Creek Ward Bishopric, came within our horizon. She was a beautiful young lady, about 25 years of age; had refused many proposals – had been waiting for the right man. Her father had done time, presumably with my father, in the penitentiary for polygamous living. I was astounded, when asking Brother Hill for the hand of his daughter, to be flatly refused. He said it could not be done; they were handling people for proposing it. I was greatly taken back. I had been at his home, with other Stake and General Officers of the Church on numerous occasions and eaten at his table. I rather took it for granted that he knew my hidden motive in being there so often and thought he was in harmony with it.

I said, 'Well, Brother Hill, it can be done, and now the responsibility is upon you. Your daughter is agreeable to the situation.'

The conversation took place in the office where I was employed, in town. He left and in about one half or three quarters of an hour he returned and assured me it was all right and that I might go ahead. Astonished and yet grateful, I asked what had happened to change

his mind so quickly. He said after leaving me he ‘bumped into Apostles John Henry Smith and M. F. Cowley’; he put the question to them. They assured him it was all right and advised him to return to me and give his consent to the marriage. Thus Mary entered into my family in the year 1901.”

The marriage was sealed by an Apostle, a member of the Quorum of Twelve, in good standing.

Joseph's father, having heard of his son embracing the law, caused him much sorrow, he supposing that his son had acted without the consent of the authorities. In order to soothe his feelings, the presiding authorities of this most honorable ‘conspiracy’ took A. M. Musser into their confidence and revealed to him the truth. His heart leaped for joy, and embracing his son Joseph, he exclaimed, “God bless you, my boy, God bless you.” Shortly before his death, Joseph's father had inscribed on his gold watch a beautiful tribute to his son, and presented the watch to him. Engraved on the watch are the following words: “St. Joseph W. Musser – In admiration of your devotion to a divine principle of the gospel. Father – Zion, May 20th, 1909.” Brother Joseph always considered the watch one of his priceless earthly possessions.

Later, under the direction of President Joseph F. Smith, this man again responded to the holy commandment and had his third wife, Ellis Shipp, sealed to him. Again in the 1930's under the direction of the Priesthood, he had another wife sealed into his family.

Thus, Joseph W. Musser, at the age of 27, was introduced to the holy principle of Celestial Plural Marriage and commanded to embrace the same. This commandment came from God, and he was duly warned that if he did not respond, he would lose every former blessing he had received in the Priesthood. He related that he was somewhat slow in obtaining his second wife. Finally he was approached by President John Henry Smith and was told that if he did not embrace the principle soon, he would lose every blessing he had ever received in the Church. He was commanded.

Joseph recorded in his Journal: "Men other than Brother Ivins were set apart to work in other parts of the country. Since the Church is subservient to the Priesthood, any action taken by it against those entering the law is null and void. A man or woman cannot properly be cut off the Church for keeping a law of God, for the Church belongs to God and God cannot act a lie and remain God."

He explained the situation confronting him: "I was resisting the Church, though I love its institutions. I had always taught my children to follow the Church, and yet I now was resisting it. My blessed children could not understand my position, nor can I blame them, neither could I explain to them the full picture any faster than they were prepared to receive it." Joseph received, because of his faithfulness, further instruction and commission:

"In the year 1915, an Apostle conferred upon me the sealing power of Elijah, with instructions to see that plural marriage shall not die out. President Snow had said I must not only enter the law, but must help keep it alive. This then was the next step in enabling me to help keep it alive. I have tried to be faithful to my trust."

Here, then, Joseph W. Musser found himself in a peculiar situation. He was the husband of three wives. He had been commanded to take the last two of these women with full knowledge that he was breaking the law of the land and the rule of the Church. Those members of the Church who heard of his action branded it as adulterous, just as they do today. Those who conspired to have him break the law, made it plain to him that he could not depend on them for comfort or relief. Indeed, President Joseph F. Smith often passed him on the street without a sign of recognition. Later under the protection of darkness, this same man would step from the shadows, and with a friendly handclasp and a pat on the back, would exclaim: "God bless you, brother Joseph, keep the good work up!"

Joseph felt the persecutions rage around him and his family. He was spoken evilly of and had a difficult time making a living. In 1909, the Salt Lake Tribune selected him as an object lesson, which was also a cover to goad the leaders of the Church for their own similar actions.

The headlines read:

“Joe Musser has now taken no. 3 – High Councilor of Granite Stake Enters Into New Polygamy in Salt Lake:

Joseph W. Musser is chief clerk and assistant secretary of the Utah Light & Railway company. His father is assistant historian and political mouthpiece of the Church. He is himself a high ecclesiast in the church, though but about 40 years of age. He is high councilor of Granite stake and as such passes on the differences between the Saints of his stake and his decisions are final, save that an appeal may be taken to the first presidency.

The president of Granite stake, Frank Y. Taylor, and his second counselor, John M. Cannon, are publicly known to have recently contracted plural marriages. So have the Sunday School Superintendent and others of this stake. In fact, Granite stake is the hotbed of new polygamy, and Forestdale, which is a part of the stake, is oftentimes spoken of as ‘Polygamyville,’ inasmuch as it is a refuge of those who are violating the laws by ‘living their religion.’”

The Tribune then goes on to name Brother Musser's wives and children and their home locations. The article continues:

“This is the first expose' that has been made of Joseph W. Musser's new polygamy. He will not be punished for his violation of the law because he has the sanction of the teaching of the Church through the 132nd chapter of the Doctrine and Covenants, and through the life of President Joseph F. Smith, who admits that he is

living with five wives and who pleaded guilty to the charge of being the father of the last of thirteen illegitimate children, recently being fined therefor the measly sum of two hundred dollars!”

It may have been because of pressures as a result of that article in the newspaper that Brother Musser was called before the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. After a lengthy questioning session before that body, he wrote: “The investigation along the lines it is being carried out, is unwarranted; the Quorum is not united, and such actions as these will tend to lose them their influence among the Saints. ... My impressions were that the brethren are not actuated by the proper spirit.”

In 1929, another marvelous event came into Joseph W. Musser's life, for the Lord spoke again.

“May 14, 1929, I was ordained a High Priest Apostle and a Patriarch to all the world, by a High Priest Apostle, and I was instructed to see that never a year passed that children were not born in the covenant of plural marriage. I was instructed to give patriarchal blessings to those applying for same, and who were denied access to a patriarch in the Church. My calling is essentially a Priesthood calling ...”

Brother Joseph related that when the Anointed of the Lord ordained him to this higher calling that he used the following words: “I ordain you a Patriarch and Apostle to the Lord, Jesus Christ, and I confer upon you all the keys, power and authority, that I myself hold, together with the responsibilities and privileges attached thereto.”

After this ordination the Prophet said to Joseph, “Now you have all that I have.”

The individual thus ordaining him further instructed Brother Joseph that he had used the same phraseology that President Taylor had used to set him apart; and that President Taylor had informed him that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, used

the same words in ordaining him (John Taylor); and that the Prophet had explained that Peter, James and John had used the same words when they ordained him to the Priesthood.

Interestingly, his ordination to the Apostleship partly fulfilled a blessing given to his mother, Mary White Musser, some years before. In that blessing she was promised that one of her sons would be ordained an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On November 9, 1930, his dear wife Mary passed away. The main speaker at her funeral was President J. Golden Kimball. Some of his remarks were written down:

“I am here at the request of Brother Musser, his wife and children; and before going on with my regular remarks on this occasion I want to say this much – that I have known Brother Musser in Church and business activities for a good many years, and I know him to be an honest man, with great faith and trust in the Lord, and courage in the cause of truth.

Oh, I know we are supposed to say nothing about this thing – we are afraid to tell the truth; it isn't always wise to tell the whole truth, but I want to say that Brother Musser has been unjustly dealt with; he has been persecuted. The principle of polygamy is true. Of course the door is now closed. The Church does not sanction the practice now. I was of that origin and I am proud of it. Brother Joseph is a better man than I am because I cannot help resenting injustice. Justice is all right, but I believe in the gospel of mercy, love, charity and patience. If this is not the truth, there is not truth. Thank God the final judgment does not rest with man.”

Because of his background and nearness to the presiding authorities of the Church, Joseph Musser received much important information. Upon one occasion, his father approached him with one of Wilford Woodruff's Journals. His father pointed to the revelation of 1889, and requested his son to copy it, stating: “Someday it will be necessary for you to

use this information.” Years later in defense of the faith, Brother Joseph was able to produce this very valuable revelation.

The anti-polygamy crusades of 1944 resulted in the imprisonment of Joseph, serving a sentence of seven months and then being placed on ‘two years’ probation. He wrote in his journal:

“My father preceded me to the penitentiary by some sixty years. I was then 13 years of age, he 55. In my youthful years, I regarded him an old man, and yet I was placed behind the bars at 73, and would have resented being called an old man, although the old timers there soon began to call me ‘Dad.’ President Lorenzo Snow was 72 years of age when he was incarcerated. So far as I know I am the oldest man placed behind the bars among the Latter-day Saints for polygamous living. When I was ordained a High Priest Apostle in May 1929, it was done in response to a revelation of the Lord to the President of the Priesthood. Previous to this, however, I was given the Priesthood of Elijah with instructions, as I was informed from President Joseph F. Smith, to seal couples in celestial marriage.”

While in prison, Brother Joseph suffered an attack, which was perhaps the forerunner of his final illness. Being completely exhausted from years of work among the people, also having been the leading figure in the long legal battle, plus discomforts of the state penitentiary, all worked together against his health. He suffered a stroke in early 1949, and was finally released from this world March 29, 1954, at the age of 82. He was buried next to his father in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

Joseph White Musser, aside from the personal effect he had for immense good in the lives of countless others, was responsible for the circulation of many publications, including many unpublished manuscripts of lasting worth. He held



responsible positions in six different states in Zion, and preached the gospel in many of the States of the Union. He was in charge of the East India Mission, attending to that responsibility from his home. He traveled from Canada to Old Mexico because of his love for and devotion to the Lord and His gospel.

Joseph W. Musser was a man of God. He received his errand from the Lord, and he devoted his life to it regardless of the cost. In his own words, as a stalwart witness in the latter days:

“I entered the state of plural marriage after the issuance of the Manifesto; and I did so with the encouragement, advice and counsel of the majority of the members of the Quorum of Apostles, and with the blessings of the President of the Church. These facts cannot be again said. The fact that I have been ‘handled’ and ‘ostracized’ for having done my duty as I was taught it, makes no difference to the case in hand. Indeed, I was told at the time by one having authority that this very thing might occur, but that it was my duty to live the law. ...

I have championed Mormonism from every angle; have accepted the revelations of Joseph Smith on the subject of celestial and plural marriage – must I say it – even against the body of the Church, and in opposition to the laws of my country; and now I find myself expelled from the Church, and a virtual outcast from its functions and benefits. Strange, but true, and yet my heart is filled with gratitude for my wives and my 21 beautiful children. Oh! how I praise God for His most wonderful blessings, and how grateful I am that the invitation came to me, as a young man, fifty years ago, to embrace the principle of plural marriage. I was assured it was of God and that His blessings would follow the law's acceptance.

As God answered the child Joseph's plea for wisdom and direction, so he is answering the prayers

of the faithful today, many of them being led to accept the fulness of the gospel, including the Patriarchal order of marriage. These Saints uphold the authorities of the Church by their faith and prayers, so far as it is possible to do without a surrender of eternal life. They would like to remain with the organization and add their strength in building it up along permanently righteous lines, but when denied this blessed privilege they are resigned and bow to the inevitable, leaving their case in the hands of God, who will judge all flesh.

That truth will prevail is certain, but that it may find a speedy lodgment in the hearts of all who have the courage and the will to seek it, is the earnest prayer of your humble servant.”

### **Publications**

New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage + Supplement

Priesthood Items

Michael, Our Father and Our God

A Priesthood Issue

Economic Order of Heaven

Celestial or Plural Marriage

Truth magazine

Star of Truth magazine

*Posthumous -*

Sermons of Joseph W. Musser

Mormon Fundamentalism Defended

It is Written

# Presidents of the Priesthood & Church

## Priesthood Presidents

*(1929-44)*

*(1844-77)*

*(1877-87)*

*(1887-98)*

Joseph Smith

Brigham Young

John Taylor

Wilford Woodruff

Lorenzo Snow  
*(1898-1901)*

Joseph F. Smith  
*(1901-18)*

John W. Woolley  
*(1918-28)*

Lorin C. Woolley  
*(1928-34)*

J. Leslie Broadbent  
*(1934-35)*

John Y. Barlow  
*(1935-49)*

Joseph W. Musser<sup>1</sup>  
*(1949-1954)*

## Church Presidents

*(1833-44)*

*(1847-77)*

*(1880-87)*

*(1889-98)*

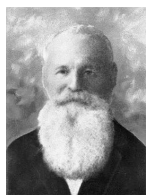
Heber J. Grant  
*(1918-45)*

George Albert Smith  
*(1945-51)*

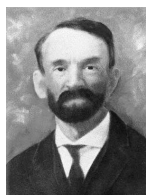
*David O. McKay*  
*(1951-70)*

## Presidents of the Priesthood

*1918 – 1954*



John W.  
Woolley



Lorin C.  
Woolley



J. Leslie  
Broadbent



John Y.  
Barlow



Joseph W.  
Musser

<sup>1</sup> A future volume will look at succession past this point.



## Reviews & Responses

*Robert R. Openshaw's, "The Notes", has a treasured place on many Saint's bookshelves, but as it is out of print some may not be aware of his 'review' of anti-Fundamentalist arguments, and so it is hoped this book will make it more easily available.*

*It is followed by a couple of notable letters to the author of an anti-Fundamentalist book:*

*Samuel W. Taylor was the grandson of President John Taylor, and son of Apostle John W. Taylor, and was a noted historian and author.*

*Ogden Kraut was a prolific Fundamentalist author, who wrote, compiled, and reprinted more books on a wider range of subjects than probably any other Latter-day Saint author.*

# Polygamy Story – A Review

## Book Review of “*Polygamy Story*” Part 1

“One or Two Great Lies”  
(*Polygamy Story*, p. 155)

### Introduction

I originally prepared 18 letters in review of Max Anderson's original work entitled *Mormon Fundamentalism*. His book that is currently in print, the *Polygamy Story*, contains parts of 13 of the original 29 chapters. He apparently is planning to include the deleted material in two more books that will shortly be coming out. This, however, will probably depend on how much controversy will be raised by the first book!

The title of this book implies that both are contained therein. This was true for the book *Mormon Fundamentalism*. *Polygamy Story*, on the other hand, has had much of the latter removed, leaving a disproportionate amount of the former. The last line on the front fly states that this book will make every reader an expert on the subject of the *Polygamy Story*. If so, they will then, unfortunately, be an expert on the Story's fiction. The Prophet Isaiah said of those of the latter days that they would make lies their refuge.<sup>1</sup> If so, in *Polygamy Story* one finds much room to hide many things.

Brother Anderson told [this author] that it was unfair that copies of his *Mormon Fundamentalism* got circulated to others, for it contained personal notes he had collected that were never intended to be shown to other Latter-day Saints. Fundamentalists have generally applauded this work, for it contains much information that confirms their claims while apparently trying to do the opposite. It was circulated by some of Brother Anderson's friends who were upset about the manner in which he quoted Joseph Musser's personal writings,

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<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah* 28:15.

such as his Book of Remembrance which has never been circulated among Fundamentalists. The irony of this situation is that that is precisely the position J. Max Anderson is in. His quotes used in [my book] *The Notes* had to be removed because he would not permit the writings of that book, which were deleted from *Polygamy Story*, to be quoted.<sup>1</sup> (When the author asked Brother Anderson about this statement concerning Heber J. Grant's 1933 Statement, he was told that that would be in one of the other books. That remains to be seen.) This is also the same position Elder Joseph Fielding Smith took with the Reorganites, namely: the Reorganites used any statement about "Utah Mormons" whereas, they will only allow the statements about themselves they approve of.<sup>2</sup> This was also observed by the anonymous LDS historian, popularly known as Dr. Clandestine, in his comments on Tanner's attack-tics.<sup>3</sup>

Now as I proceed, I will comment upon the characteristics of Mr. Anderson's writings. Then I will review his book, *The Polygamy Story*. It is obvious to those studying these two books, *Mormon Fundamentalism* and *Polygamy Story*, here-in referred to as *Fundamentalism* and *Story*, that their author has amassed an extensive collection of information concerning the living and importance of God's laws in the last days. It is equally obvious that when he presented this to the Church authorities it contained too many references they didn't want circulated. Undoubtedly, much was cut that he personally would have left it.

### Characteristics of an Author

"Do not betray Jesus, the brethren, or revelations lest innocent blood be found on you."

*(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 156)*

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1 See section 27.143 of *The Notes*.

2 See *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage*, Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., p. 96.

3 *Jerald and Sandra Tanner's Distorted View of Mormonism*, 1977.

Doeg's truthful statements got 85 priests, plus men, women, and children killed.<sup>1</sup> (*1 Samuel 22:7-9*)

“Alas, comprehensible patterns and understandable explanations are not always correct. If the first half of the battle is to find your theory, the second half is to test it. You must consider not only the problems it answers, but the problems it raises.” (*Morton Smith, Secret Gospel, p. 96*)

*Mormon Fundamentalism* is a treasure trove of information and will cause many serious problems for the Church, as illustrated in the quantity of material deleted before it was published as *Polygamy Story*.

## 1. Parallel Attacks

Brother Anderson attacks the Priesthood as the Tanners attacked the Church with the same spirit (unbelief and bitterness), same methods (sources from obscure journals and apostates), and finds the same results (their works will “sell copy” amongst those who want to support their unbelief, but will not affect those to whom their works ought to be directed if they were writing to bring souls to Christ, because they can clearly see the dishonesty of the approach). However, much of the defensiveness was removed by the time *Story* came to print.

## 2. Amalakiah Principles:

Accuse others of deeds like yours. (*Alma 47:24, 34*)

*Fundamentalism*, page 456 (commenting on an additional part added to *Journal of Discourses* 9:87 in *A Priesthood Issue*, page 8) “This quotation is found nowhere in Church history, so Joseph Musser, of course, can give no reference. This is an example of the lengths Fundamentalists will go to to indicate a doctrine that stands without basis.”

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 21-22.



*Fundamentalism*, page 398 (commenting on an Orson Pratt quote, mentioned by Joseph F. Smith, about the “One Mighty and Strong” not found in the *Deseret News*) “The fact that the statement referred to may not be found published in the *Deseret News* or in any of the published sermons of Orson Pratt during the time mentioned, means absolutely nothing as to whether the statement was or was not made. Many sermons made by General Authorities of the Church, both today and since the beginning, have never been put in print and distributed to the public, but remain in the Church Archives and are available to qualified persons for review and other legitimate purposes.”

“The absence of evidence may narrow possibility but does not rule it out. Unless something can be positively ruled out for other reasons, there always remains the possibility that it occurred even though it is not noted in the documentation at hand” (*BYU Studies*, Spring 1979:397)

Notice that *Fundamentalism*, page 398 asserts that the Church Historians Office keeps evidence away from the hands!

“The fact that Brigham Young was sustained President of the Church in 1845 was therefore public knowledge among those who witnessed it, but unknown to those who depended upon the published account of the conference. The official history of the LDS Church omits entirely the reference to Brigham Young being sustained to any position in April 1845; see History of the Church 7:392.” (*BYU Studies*, Winter 1976:216)

### **3. Documentation Disappearance**

The four references in the Amalakiah section illustrate this principle also. This could also be termed archive acrobatics! Throughout the book, Brother Anderson's

arguments are often based on missing documents (*Story*, pages 14, 15, 18, 22, 23, 29, 33, 51, 52, 56, 64, 69, 71, 72, 134). Consider the above quote from *BYU Studies*, Spring 1979, by Ronald Esplin (and he works for the Church Historians Office!). Or consider Reed Durham's support of Church Succession, "While such changes appear to us as normal developments, the absence of a written record of revelation on any Church practice is, of course, not conclusive evidence that no revelation was received."<sup>1</sup>

In *Fundamentalism*, page 108 (*Story*, page 46-7) we are asked to consider recorded business of the day (about 1886) as found in 1976 in the prepared letter boxes which the historians have had 90 years to prepare and arrange as they please, putting some letter in and taking another out and placing them in other locations and then we are asked to believe Brother Anderson when he says there was no such correspondence "found"!

In *Fundamentalism*, page 47 (*Story*, page 14) we are told a "careful search" of John T. Caine's letterbox failed to produce a letter to John T. Caine which showed Caine's desire to satisfy the Gentiles. On the contrary, Brother Caine was "laboring diligently in Washington to protect the Saints in their rights to live Plural Marriage without interference or restriction." Brother Max's other "no record" arguments are similar. If we consider truth to be a knowledge of things as they were,<sup>2</sup> then it appears that the author of *Polygamy Story* is more interested in telling how things were recorded in certain selected locations than in how they actually were! If Brother Anderson would have considered *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:733 in referring to Brother Caine in the 1886-7 era, he would have read that "He (J. T. Caine) was President of the convention and strongly urged the adoption of the clause in the proposed constitution prohibiting polygamy, believing this to be the true solution of the 'Mormon' problem, and the only course that would satisfy the government and people of the United States." So is Max Anderson really

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1 *Succession in the Church*, Reed Durham, p. 46.

2 *Doctrine & Covenants* 93:24.

asking us to believe that in all Brother Caine's corresponding with the President of the Church and his counselors, he never once mentioned his true feelings, and it waited for Andrew Jensen in 1901 to discover them? This does seem doubtful. But if there were letters written, where did they go?

#### 4. Interesting Deletions

In *Fundamentalism*, page 218, he quotes *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 94<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to prove that plural marriage is not the same as celestial marriage. He quotes only the first half of the paragraph and thus presents a logically correct conclusion based on a historical distortion. Max Anderson quoted down to "... same God commanded me to obey it.") Then he said, "Joseph Smith did not say celestial or plural marriage, but he said celestial and plural marriage, thus recognizing that they were related, but not (equitable) terms." Now read the entire paragraph and notice how many times Joseph Smith used the word "it." Can "it" readily be used to refer back to two different, non-equitable subjects, namely "celestial" and "plural marriage?"<sup>2</sup>

#### 5. Opposing Apologists

Like all Church Apologists who are trying to "fit all the requirements of variety as profusely documented in early Church literature and practice" (*Fundamentalism*, page 3) and that are constantly being let out by Church scholars about the nature of the doctrines and practices of Ancient Mormonism (i.e. before 1890), Brother Anderson has had to maintain opposites, such as:

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1 *Contributor* 5:259.

2 For statements of the equation of Plural Marriage with Celestial Marriage, see Charles W. Penrose (*Millennial Star* 45:454;27:199; *Most Holy Principle* 1:423) and George Teasdale (*Journal of Discourses* 25:21; *The Notes* 27.188).

A.

|                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 306 – The word of the Lord said to maintain the ministry and counseled the the Saints “not to go without scrip” | <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 308 – Without purse or scrip is still practiced to the present day (1976) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

*Fundamentalism*, page 205 says “Thus those who continue to live ‘higher principles’ after the Lord has officially withdrawn their practice are disobeying the Lord's counsel and will ‘reap disaster’ ...”

B.

- Fundamentalism*, page 180
  - Plural Marriage was stopped in 1887<sup>1</sup>
- Fundamentalism*, page 477
  - Plural Marriage was stopped in 1890<sup>2</sup>
- Fundamentalism*, page 492
  - Plural Marriage was stopped in 1898
- Fundamentalism*, page 509
  - Plural Marriage was stopped in 1904

You know? This sounds more like a chain smoker who says he can stop anytime he wants to and has done so a dozen times in the past, and each time it was *final*!<sup>3</sup>

C.

|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 634 – Joseph F. Smith said no man on earth has keys of Plural Marriage sealing | <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 472 – Keys of sealing power devolved upon President of the Twelve as a matter of course. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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1 Also *Fundamentalism*, Anderson, page 186, 184, 482.  
2 Also *Fundamentalism*, Anderson, pages 496, 498, 523, 164.  
3 See also *The Notes, Manifesto in Review*, 27:94 to 27:116.

How can a living man hold *all* the keys & still not have some of the keys?

D.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 310 – Fundamentalists claim keys of missionary work and don't perform. To claim authority without the responsibility is unacceptable and a sham. ( <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 564-5) | <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 287 – President of the Church holds all keys of Priesthood, (but doesn't perform Plural Marriage). |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Isn't holding keys of plural sealings and not exercising them also a “sham”? Especially since Joseph F. Smith<sup>1</sup> says to hold Priesthood and not exercise it will cause its loss. If it were said, “But the Lord stopped Plural Marriage”, then the only answer necessary is the question, “When”? Then you are back to the argument of (B) above, was in 1887? 1890? etc.

E.

|                                                                                           |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 364 – Latter-Day Saints scattered to be leaven to the world. | <i>Fundamentalism</i> , page 660 quotes 2 Timothy 3:13-4 that evil men to grow worse. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

How do you leaven what is getting worse, without the leaven becoming more worldly?

Apostasy is defined<sup>2</sup> as forsaking one's faith, religion, party or principles. Elder McConkie defines Apostasy as follows: “Apostasy consists in the abandonment and forsaking of these true principles, and all those who do not believe and conform to them are in an apostate condition, whether they are the ones who departed from the truth or whether they inherited

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<sup>1</sup> *Way to Perfection*, page 219-21, *The Notes* 28.97.

<sup>2</sup> *Story*, Anderson, page 77; *Fundamentalism*, Anderson, page 160.

their false concepts from their apostate fathers.”<sup>1</sup> Max has clearly demonstrated apostasy, according to this definition, in several major areas:

- (1) forsaking Celestial and Plural Marriage,
- (2) loss of revelation,
- (3) forsaking of previous revelations from the Lord, such as the 1886 Revelation.
- (4) principle of going without purse or scrip to preach the gospel,
- (5) complete garment modification,
- (6) reverting from the complete endowment that Joseph Smith commissioned Brigham Young to develop, back to the partial endowment in early Nauvoo as recorded by William Clayton.<sup>2</sup>

Max puts much weight on “circumstances” that cause changes in doctrines and practices.<sup>3</sup> The Lord indicates that his laws and commandments are unchangeable.<sup>4</sup> He commands! Those men who obey receive the blessings<sup>5</sup>, but they who do not will find that, indeed, circumstances will change and the law or commandment will be revoked and they will not receive the blessing.<sup>6</sup> This revelation goes on and portrays many modern brethren. “Then they say in their hearts, this is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But woe unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above.”<sup>7</sup> Or putting it another way, after the Lord commanded the Brethren to establish and maintain certain laws, and many had died that were originally commanded and persecution beset those that remained, they said, “What need hath my Lord

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1 *Mormon Doctrine*, McConkie, page 43, as quoted in *The Notes*, page 2.28.

2 *Fundamentalism*, Anderson, page 315.

3 *Fundamentalism*, Anderson, pages 140, 200, 202, 228, 231, 308, 318, 341, 363, 394, 437.

4 *Doctrine & Covenants* 3:2-3; 130:20.

5 *Doctrine & Covenants* 82:10.

6 *Doctrine & Covenants* 58:30-32.

7 *Doctrine & Covenants* 58:33.

of this tower, seeing this is a time of peace? Might not this money be given to the exchangers? For there is no need of these things.”<sup>1</sup> And they phased out these laws, ordinances, practices and doctrines.

In *Fundamentalism*, page 199 Brother Anderson quotes George Q. Cannon saying in 1895 that revelations come from the Lord according to the circumstances and conditions of the people.<sup>2</sup> In 1857, President Cannon gave LDS instructions that they were not to use circumstances as an excuse not to keep God's laws:

“‘Ah,’ say such individuals, ‘I know that such and such things are right and ought to be attended to; but my circumstances are such that I cannot do it; when it comes convenient, I will attend to it. Their circumstances not coming convenient, the performance of these things is put off, the time of probation is frittered away, and they come short of obtaining the blessings and the reward they might have received had they been diligent.

There may be circumstances of such a nature that the person who is subject to them cannot do as he would wish; but in the great majority of instances it is for us if we expect to gain a celestial glory, to exercise such faith that we can control circumstances and make them subservient to our purpose. It would be folly for men to expect, in the great day of reward, that the excuse of their circumstances not being convenient for them to obey the law which the Lord says must be obeyed for all those unto whom it is revealed<sup>3</sup> would cause Him to bestow the same reward and exaltation upon them that he would upon those who obeyed it.

The requirements of every law of God are inexorable and cannot be set aside. He never gave a commandment unto the children of men without

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1 *Doctrine & Covenants* 101:48-9.

2 *Gospel Teachings* 1:323.

3 *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:3.

opening a way by which they could fulfill it; if they do not fulfill it, therefore, through lack of diligence or faith on their part, they must be losers. He has done all that He can, consonant with justice, in revealing the law, with the rewards and penalties attached to obedience and disobedience, and in promising the necessary assistance to enable them to fulfill it if they will but seek for it. All who have ever sought for this assistance have obtained it and have proved for themselves that the Lord requires nothing of mankind but what, if they seek it, he gives them power to perform; and there are no circumstances however seemingly difficult which conspire to prevent them from obeying His commandments but what the Spirit of the Lord will enable them, in His own due time, to surmount and control.”<sup>1</sup>

President Cannon said in April of 1890: “Man, having his agency, need not, unless he so wishes, become the entire creature of these circumstances. It becomes his duty to contend against that which is evil and, by the help of God, to overcome evil inclinations and rise above evil surroundings.”<sup>2</sup> President Joseph Fielding Smith put it this way: “It is not our prerogative to decide that some principles no longer apply to our social and cultural circumstances. The Lord's laws are eternal, and we have the fulness of his everlasting gospel and are obligated to believe all of his laws, and the truths and then to walk in conformity with them.”<sup>3</sup> Or to quote President Grant: “No commandment was ever given to us but what God has given us the power to keep that commandment.”<sup>4</sup>

Brother Anderson states that we now live under different circumstances and so have different requirements than at the time of Joseph Smith (*Fundamentalism*, page 365). The same could be said about the Children of Israel: they lived under different circumstances and had different requirements

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1 *Western Standard*, May 1, 1857; *Gospel Teachings* 1:100-101.

2 *Deseret News Weekly*, 27 April 1890.

3 *New Era*, September 1971, page 39-40, *The Notes* 25:19.

4 *Improvement Era* 48:123, *The Notes* 25:21.



than Abraham had, but they will also not receive the same rewards as Abraham. This is the Gospel perspective. Stating it as Elder Orson Pratt did, where there is a law, there is also a penalty for breaking that law.<sup>1</sup>

Now to get down to the heart of the “Apostasy” problem: by 1890 the majority of the Church was convinced that Plural Marriage must be discontinued. Up to this time the Priesthood had maintained that God would sustain the LDS practice of that Principle and to abrogate it was apostasy.<sup>2</sup> The 1890 Manifesto was the public relinquishment of it albeit the Authorities actively perpetuated it at least up through 1904 notwithstanding their many “seeming denials.”<sup>3</sup> The Fundamentalist Movement is a direct continuation of Priesthood policy inaugurated by President John Taylor, implemented by President Wilford Woodruff. For example on 5 October 1895, A. W. Ivins was set apart to seal in plural marriage in Mexico those couples sent to him by the First Presidency<sup>4</sup>, and continued through the administration of President Joseph F. Smith. That Movement is to this day living proof that the Principle needn't have been totally abandoned as it is today in the LDS Church. Hence the fear and hatred shown toward it.

*Fundamentalism*, page 661 quotes Elder Heber C. Kimball as stating that Brother Joseph Smith said that apostasy is commenced with loss of confidence in the leaders of the Church and Kingdom. To apply this principle as Brother Anderson does, would completely stop the missionary labors of the Church for as an Elder approaches an investigator he would recognize that he was asking him to lose confidence in his pope, priest, minister or whatever. Obviously this does not occur to the Elder because he is convinced that the man's system is in basic error because it differs from the Word of God as set down in the beginning of the Christian dispensation and had over the years departed from the principles

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1 *Journal of Discourses* 16:5; *D&C* 58:30-32.

2 See *Story*, Anderson, page viii, also *The Notes* 27.191.

3 See *The Notes, Manifesto In Review*, 27.94 through 27.116.

4 See *The Notes* 28.87; 39.53.

established by Jesus the Christ, the Prophets and Apostles. The Elder has a series of logical discussions designed to illustrate those departures when compared with the Scriptures. Modern Mormonism cannot bear up under a similar comparison. If Joseph Smith restored the Gospel and commissioned the Twelve to build upon the foundation he laid and according to the vision he saw<sup>1</sup>, then any departure from the Gospel Principles and Ordinances he established would be an active loss of confidence in his foundation and show the possessor to be on the “road to apostasy.”<sup>2</sup> I will pursue this no further for the pages of *The Notes* chronicle many of those changes as the Truths are scaled down according to the Apostasy Syndrome to a level where the modern LDS can accept them, or as Brother Brigham said in his day, the LDS were preparing for apostasy and would sever the thread to himself.<sup>3</sup> The intervening years have almost completed the first (notice how in April 1980 Conference it was applauded how completely the LDS and their Leaders are accepted and praised by the world) and the second, the Priesthood tie to Brother Brigham (i.e. those who like Brigham kept alive the Fulness of the Gospel) was severed in the early 1920's.

One last issue remains. Prosperity. This is claimed as a fruit of correctness. Consider the following:

First, John 15:19-20;

Second, James 4:4;

Third, 2 Timothy 3:12,

Fourth, the Amnesty Prayer<sup>4</sup>, we “voluntarily” gave this up;

Fifth, SLT Sept. 10, 1937, HJG;

Sixth, (not equating the two) didn't the apostate Christian Church prosper after 425 AD as it had never before? and didn't the LDS Church really start prospering after September 1890?

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1 See *The Notes* 28.31.

2 *Journal of Discourses* 3:270.

3 *Journal of Discourses* 4:43-4; *The Notes* 2.41.46.

4 *The Notes* 27.62; 39.48.

## Book Review of “*Polygamy Story*” Part 2

### The Principle of Plural Marriage

In the Introduction of *Polygamy Story* vii, Brother Anderson summed up the entire issue by stating that Plural Marriage “was declared a divine law from the pulpit and was commended to the Church as a necessary commandment.” It is argued that it is not necessary today<sup>1</sup>, and if so it would seem then that any commandment “commended” to the Church though viewed as necessary today, might not be so tomorrow. This would obviously include such principles as baptism, marriage for time and eternity, or any other the Government may decide to outlaw and the Heavens would be expected to bow to the Governmental Edict! A ridiculous proposition! On page eight, Brother Anderson states: “It was zealously proclaimed that the principle would never be given up, and that if it were the Church would be in an apostate condition.” Reviewing the definition of Elder McConkie<sup>2</sup> we find that if the Celestial Law is given, any departure from it is apostasy; whether in the persons so deviating or in their descendants who inherited their ideas from their apostate fathers. This is indeed an appropriate definition.<sup>3</sup>

### Contemporary Journal Accounts

*Polygamy Story*, page 45

Here *Polygamy Story* says that the events in Centerville can be “controlled” by evidence from existent journals. Any historian or student, and particularly one familiar with LDS journals of the 1800's (or any writer of a journal during times of extreme stress) knows that journals do not necessarily reveal all or even the most important events of

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1 *Mormon Doctrine*, McConkie, page 578; *The Notes* 27.93.

2 *Mormon Doctrine*, McConkie, page 43; *The Notes* 2.28.

3 For a summary of teachings on the importance and necessity of Plural Marriage, see *The Notes* 27 and 27.4.

a person's life. Consider the following questions: (1) Where in all of Joseph Smith's extensive writings and journals, official or otherwise, is there evidence that he lived the principle of Plural Marriage? In the 1860's, when the RLDS were making their attacks on Utah Mormons for "beginning Plural Marriage", the only "hard" evidence that could be mustered was notarized statements of Saints who bore their testimonies of what happened. Do the "contemporary journal accounts" control The Principle in Nauvoo? Obviously NOT! (2) Although *Polygamy Story* takes the apparent stand of Heber J. Grant in 1933 that the 1886 revelation was spurious<sup>1</sup>, in Fundamentalism, page 156 he called it a "little known, but authentic revelation of the Lord to John Taylor." Historians without a doctrinal axe to grind concede that the revelation is authentic. Yet where are the "contemporary journal accounts" to verify it?

In 1933, Heber J. Grant denied that there was a revelation given in September of 1886, and denied that there was any Priesthood conferral at that time. On pages 33, 34, and 46 he quotes from the journals of L. John Nuttall ("President's Office Journal") and George Q. Cannon to show that there is no evidence of an 1886 Priesthood conferral. But even this evidence is too strong for him for it also shows that there is no evidence that there was a revelation given on the 26th or the 27th of September. The revelation, which he has conceded is authentic, is dated September 27, 1886. Since the contemporary journal accounts suppress the fact of the revelation entirely, it should not appear at all surprising that that same journal would equally suppress the Priesthood ordinances which proceeded from that heavenly communication.

If Brother Anderson really wants to discuss what is or is not said in contemporary journal accounts, then they all ought to be discussed, not just a few. The journals of President John Taylor, L. John Nuttall (for September, 1886), and Wilford Woodruff (for September, 1886) ought to be released and their contents considered alongside the others. The first

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<sup>1</sup> See *Story*, Anderson, pages 67-68.

was “lost” after B. H. Roberts completed his *Life of John Taylor*. From the account therein he was going to include the events surrounding the 1886 revelation but the Brethren refused him permission to do so. The 1886 sections of the other two are conspicuously absent. When asked about this coincidence, Brother Anderson commented that it does look a little suspicious! These missing documents, or “Documents Disappearance” as mentioned at the start of this Review<sup>1</sup>: the event occurred, those who were there witnessed it, but those who depend upon the written word know nothing about it, for it has been deleted. One is almost tempted to compare this process to its older brother mentioned in 1 Nephi 13:26!

### **Corroboration of Journals**

*Polygamy Story*, page 47

We have nothing to fear from the words of those who lived and believed the Fullness of the Gospel at any time. They will agree, as they become available!

### **John Taylor’s Stamina and Transfiguration**

*Polygamy Story*, page 52

If one considers the handwriting of President Taylor as reproduced in Unpublished Revelations 163-173, he sees the hand of an old, but strong man. Brother Anderson must determine in his own mind whether President Taylor pitched quoits daily and for hours, or on the other hand is old, not in good health, and whose health has had its toll taken. His comparison of President Taylor to Sidney Rigdon on page 53 is strictly rhetorical. Rigdon was “limp and pale,” limber as a rag, but not because he was older than Joseph by 12 years, but because Sidney was not used to the experience as Joseph was.

Brother Anderson conveniently failed to mention that Sidney was not as worthy a man as Joseph in 1832 and also failed to mention that Joseph emerged from the same

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1 See the process discussed in *The Notes* 29.26.

experience as strong as a lion.<sup>1</sup> In 1832 Joseph had said that he himself had only recently been guilty of “many corruptions of youth” sins! John Taylor had not! He was worthy and was strong spiritually as Joseph was in 1832. John probably was greatly buoyed up in strength by the Spirit. Also note the many revelations received by John Taylor during the 1880's: November 19, 1877, December 16, 1877, June 25, 26, 1882, June 27, 1882, another in June or July of 1882, October 13, 1882, April 14, 1883, April 28, 1883, May 1884, December 25, 1884, and September 27, 1886.<sup>2</sup>

The parallel to the weakness felt by Sidney Rigdon is found in the life of Moses also, but this was his first such experience. The theophany of the Prophet Joseph was also attended with weakness, but apparently one of the main reasons for his going into the grove was to seek forgiveness of his sins. This was not the condition of President Taylor in 1886. In fact, during October Conference in 1880, President Taylor said that of late he had spent more time with those on the other side of the veil than any time before in his life.<sup>3</sup>

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1 See *The Vision*, N. B. Lundwall, page 11.

2 See *Unpublished Revelations* 119-146.

3 See *The Notes* 27.144a.

## Book Review of “Polygamy Story” Part 3

### The 1886 Revelation

Mention has already been made of Brother Anderson's statement in *Fundamentalism*, page 156 that this is an authentic Revelation. Nevertheless in *Story*, page 64 a footnote states that its authenticity “has not been established.” If he means by this, to be presented at conference, then indeed it hasn't, although it was suggested that President Harold B. Lee desired to do this very thing just prior to his death.

In *Fundamentalism*, page 130 he states that the original is purportedly in the Church Historian's Office and *Fundamentalism*, page 140 gives 4 reasons why Heber J. Grant's 1933 Statement denying the 1886 revelation cannot be taken as true. [For example] Raymond W. Taylor found 11 reproductions of the 1886 Revelation in the Church Historian's Office, some made by the church historian.<sup>1</sup>

In *Polygamy Story*, page 67, Max Anderson quotes Elder Joseph Fielding Smith saying that he made a copy of the original. Then on page 66 he rewrote the middle paragraph so as to delete the names of those in attendance at the trial of John W. Taylor. This becomes important because Heber J. Grant, as an Apostle, attended that meeting and this throws grave doubt on his 1933 statement when he said, “From the personal knowledge of some of us,” that revelation does not exist. This “some of us” in this carefully worded document must not have included Elder Grant because he knew that it existed; because at that same trial is when Joseph Fielding told his fellow Apostles that he had himself made a copy of the original of that very revelation.<sup>2</sup> Does the student not see some twisting going on here? Then to end all doubt, in *Polygamy Story*, page 68 it is shown that Elder Anthony W. Ivins found the original in the archives not 7 months later! Alas! Note that

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1 See *The Notes* 27.143. Also see *Kingdom or Nothing* 368-9 (*The Notes* 27.144).

2 See *Story*, Anderson, page 67.

he found the pencil copy of President Taylor and not Joseph Fielding's typed copy.

A parallel here is interesting. During the Temple Lot Case, Mercy Rachel Thompson, plural wife of Hyrum Smith, said that she had seen the original of D&C 132 in Nauvoo. "It was written on foolscap paper. ... I think the last word would be amen, likely, but I do not remember it. I do not know that the name of Joseph Smith was signed to it."<sup>1</sup> In *Fundamentalism*, page 141 (and deleted from *Story*, page 68) a letter by Elder Melvin J. Ballard is quoted which states that the 1886 Revelation in the Archives was "undoubtedly ... in his handwriting." See also Most Holy Principle 4:49 which reports the sermon given by Reed Durham to various High Priest quorums around Salt Lake City telling that the 1886 revelation had been examined by handwriting experts and that it definitely was John Taylor's. The obvious question that would occur to the mind is: Does the President of the Church copy down what Elder Mark E. Petersen calls a "concocted, false, and spurious revelation?"<sup>2</sup> Is it also not strange that historians of the Church are making and depositing copies of a concocted revelation, at least 11 of them, in the Church Archives? and stating on these copies that they were made from the original of that "spurious" revelation and yet nowhere indicate that it is anything but genuine, or as Brother Anderson stated, "from the Lord to John Taylor?"<sup>3</sup>

With all the evidence both spiritual and physical, can a Saint honestly deny that there was indeed a revelation given to President Taylor September 27, 1886? Consider the subsequent action of the Church in constantly and absolutely denying any Plural Marriages having been performed with its knowledge and consent since 1890. Yet it is obvious to every Latter-day Saint that someone is maintaining The principle of Plural Marriage underground from 1887 to at least 1904. Wilford Woodruff denied that there was any Plural Marriages being performed by the Church after 1887, and yet he himself

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1 *Temple Lot Case*, page 347.

2 See *Way of the Master*, Petersen, page 57.

3 *Fundamentalism*, Anderson, page 156.



had those men set apart who officiated in plural sealings in Mexico, Canada, and other locations. If President Woodruff denied those he ordained publicly is it strange that those who followed also followed his lead, such as Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, Mark E. Petersen, or J. Max Anderson? And can we conclude other than that there was Priesthood delegation at Centreville in September 1886? It could not be otherwise.

Joseph the Prophet established the ‘Doctrine of Duplicity’ in Kirtland as early as 1835 and continued it to the time of his death. President Young continued it unabated until August 29, 1852, when the Law of Patriarchal Marriage was for the first time presented to the Latter-day Saints. Duplicity was not needed again until President John Taylor once more instituted it in 1884 in its reverse form. He quietly stopped issuing recommends for Plural Marriage through Church channels while still maintaining them through strictly Priesthood channels.<sup>1</sup> President Woodruff made duplicity Church policy on September 24, 1890. It was maintained through about 9 subsequent Manifestos between 1890 and 1918.<sup>2</sup> In 1907, as actually one of the 9 Manifestos, President Joseph F. Smith denied that there had been any duplicity in the Church. This declaration was probably “inspired” by the Reed Smoot Testimonies and the “need” for another statement.<sup>3</sup> President Smith stated that the LDS Church had been true to its pledge to discontinue Plural Marriage since it approved the State Constitution prohibiting Plural Marriages. This occurred in 1887.<sup>4</sup> Which brings us back to the events of September 1886, when the details of Priesthood procedures were perfected so that the laws of God could continue as He had appointed in this dispensation and the works of men would be frustrated.<sup>5</sup>

*Polygamy Story*, page 74 - 1886 revelation adds

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1 See *Story*, Anderson, page 111.

2 See “Manifesto in Review”, *The Notes* 27.94 through 27.116.

3 See *Messages of the First Presidency* 4:145.

4 *Most Holy Principle* 2:11, *Stout* 1:300.

5 *Doctrine & Covenants* 3:1-3.

nothing new to the requirements. Note: Very carefully chosen words! and true. The requirements are not at all changed, only the procedure and its attendant authority established by he who holds the keys under the direction of he whose dispensation this is as well as his Master. The stopping of Plural Marriage and the revelation commanding the same is universally ascribed to the wrong President at the wrong time as a result of the wrong revelation. The 1886 Revelation becomes very important because of what took place in March, 1887 Plural Marriage left the Church finally for the remainder of this dispensation, or at least until the “winding up scene.”

At the bottom of page 74, before the word “up”, the words of Elder Lyman are deleted from the Trial of John W. Taylor.<sup>1</sup> This omission is important for it tells why the principle of Plural Marriage was not revoked, but only the practice of it in the Church.<sup>2</sup> A rhetorical question that might be considered here would be: How do you revoke a principle among those who are not abiding that principle? Obviously it was already revoked, having never been administered to them. The only thing that could be revoked would be the opportunity for a man to enter that law by going to the Church. That was revoked in March, 1887. it is obvious that the LDS had rejected the practice and therefore the principle of Plural Marriage by a judgment of their actions: only 2% complied with it when it was a requirement to them. If only 14% of the Latter-day Saints paid tithing, one would say that 86% had rejected that ordinance and none would argue excepting the 86%. They would say they believed the principle of Tithing but for various circumstances had not complied. The Bishop of one of the 86% would probably quote James 2:20, stating that their faith without corresponding works is dead.

This brings us to fidelity. In a quote from the Juvenile Instructor<sup>3</sup> found in *Fundamentalism*, page 56 and deleted from the material in *Polygamy Story*, page 21, we find that President George Q. Cannon stated the following after the

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1 They are recorded in *The Notes* 27:140f.

2 *Polygamy Story*, p. 75.

3 *Juvenile Instructor* 26:670.

remarks of President Woodruff at Cache Stake Conference in November 1891: “When the time came that in His infinite wisdom he viewed his people had made sufficient sacrifices and had shown their fidelity, he said, ‘It is enough.’ He inspired his servant Wilford Woodruff to issue what is called the Manifesto. He relieved his servants from the immense responsibility which they were bearing, by making known his mind and will concerning this doctrine and practice; and that all might know it was his mind and will he has given the testimony of his Holy Spirit to every one of his servants and people who have sought for it. Whatever their personal feelings might be, they have known that that which had been done is the mind and will of the Lord.” Now lets look a little closer at this statement. Who did He say “it is enough” to? Who were the servants that were relieved of responsibility? It was the officers of the Church! They were told in the 1880 revelation, and throughout President Taylor's term as Church President that the leaders must enter Plural Marriage or step down. The 1886 revelation relieved them of that obligation. After 1886 when men entered the Principle, they no longer went to their Bishop and then Stake President as before. Another procedure had been established.<sup>1</sup> And finally who sought for a testimony of the Spirit? Most monogamists were so happy about the turn of events in September 1890, they felt there was no need to inquire they understood of themselves perfectly. Who was tried in their feelings? Those who had a testimony of that Principle, who had obeyed, who knew it was necessary and essential! When they sought, they obtained a confirmation of the spirit that what President Woodruff had done was of the Lord and right. The Principle had been taken once more out of the Church and would be administered among those Saints who loved Truth and were willing to abide it in purity.

This is made even more painfully obvious in a paragraph quoted in *Story*, page 116.<sup>2</sup> Read this reference. Now look carefully at the pronouns. It would take a command

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1 See *The Notes* 27.93d.

2 *Deseret News Weekly*, 21 November 1891. See *The Notes* 27.45.

of God to change *our* attitude. It required the same authority to say to *us*, “It is enough.” Now God has accepted *your* sacrifice. The 98% had made some sacrifice, it was hard times for all Mormondom in the 1880's. He has seen what *you* have passed through. The monogamists in the Church had viewed themselves as suffering on account of laws they had nothing to do with. It takes good people to do this and not want to strike back. He had seen how determined *you* were to keep the commandments, i.e. none of the 98% did keep that law. And now he said (to *you*) “It is enough.” Notice the next 3 sentences. The same authority gave *us* the principle. “*us*” is the 2% who had received that law. (Just as it was prophesied that if the LDS rejected Plural Marriage another people would be raised up they did and they were. This speech of Elder Cannon shows very definite hints that that is just exactly what is happening in 1891.<sup>1</sup> It was not the word of man but it was the word of the Lord at the time that Plural Marriage was stopped in the Church, namely it was the word of God to John Taylor in September 1886.) And now the last sentence: It is for *us* to obey the law! Recall that this is in 1891 just after the testimonies before Chancery at which time President Woodruff had testified that Plural Marriage had stopped throughout the Church in all nations and that it also included Unlawful Cohabitation.

The very next sentence following this quote in *Polygamy Story*, page 116 is: “Thus Wilford Woodruff publicly terminated the practice of plural marriage by virtue of the office of President of the High Priesthood of the Church;...” With this “unequivocal” statement, how could even one more plural marriage occur anywhere since the one man must give his consent. See present interpretation of D&C 132:7. But let's look at this sentence also. “Thus Wilford Woodruff publicly terminated...” This might be the case, but it did not occur in 1891. This was simply a Stake Conference where President Woodruff explained his prior actions. What he did was done in September 1890. But September 24, 1890, was a statement that was issued by him to the national press in

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1 For more prophecies of this, see Chapter 38 of *The Notes*, “Zion.”

which he himself stated that he had terminated plural marriages and there had been none performed since Spring of 1889. And if none of the authorities dared change the Law without a direct command of the Lord and it was stopped before the Spring of 1889, when was that command given? In an interview with President Woodruff in October 1889, it was stated that President Taylor refused to give recommends for Plural Marriage, and they were not solemnized.<sup>1</sup> Once more we return to 1886! Once more we must acknowledge that there *were* Plural Marriages being performed by men in the Priesthood, independent of the Church. Even in the Trial of John W. Taylor it was testified several times that George Q. Cannon himself directed that work while a Counsellor in the First Presidency. Thus we have from 1886 on the duplicity that is so obvious in the Work of the Lord when the majority of men are not faithful and obedient to the ordinances. *You* have made *your* sacrifices and *you* are relieved of *your* immense responsibility, but it is for *us* to obey the law!

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Notes* 27.54; *Most Holy Principle* 2: 157.

## Book Review of “Polygamy Story” Part 4

### Keys of Authority

#### Without Official Sanction

*Polygamy Story*, page 101

At the end of October 1882 Conference, President George Q. Cannon warned Latter-day Saints who were monogamists and felt that they were the saviors of the people that that was a “dangerous thought” and delusive, and not true. He then stated that “if God saves this people, as I firmly believe he will, it will be through those men and through those women whom men have placed under a ban;”<sup>1</sup> Today the Church is in a position that all the offices therein have been wrested from polygamists, as it was in the 1880's, and are filled totally by monogamists. They obviously feel they are the saviors of the Latter-day Saints. Consider how it was in the days of the polygamists, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor. There was persecution, hatred, misrepresentation on every hand. None of these exist today. In their place is mutual respect, love, understanding and praise for the Mormons and their leaders. On strictly worldly principles it would appear that the monogamists did choose the better path. Mormons have a monogamist President with monogamist counsellors. The Quorum of Twelve are all monogamists. The same could be said for all the officers. The *Polygamy Story* is indeed a book written for those who have rejected the fulness of the sealing ordinance to encourage them that they really did the right thing by not obeying the Patriarchal Order of Marriage even from the beginning, even them and their grandfathers and great-grandfathers. And if any marriages were performed between March 1887 and April 1904 that were plural, they also were adulterous as are all since April 1904. Latter-day Saints who understand this premise reject it for they know that there was Priesthood authority outside the Church functioning between 1887 and 1904 that even the Church today

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<sup>1</sup> *The Notes* 27:184; *Journal of Discourses* 23:380.

acknowledges. They can't rightfully deny it but do not want to discuss it for obvious reasons.

During October 1886 Conference, President Taylor said that there were men twisting and sneaking around trying to tone down plural marriage so it would be more acceptable to the views of the day. He then quoted from the 1882 revelation that "it is not mete that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood." He said that there were men who would very much like to do that.<sup>1</sup> In *Story*, page 102 Brigham Young is quoted saying that there is but one man on earth in the Church who holds the keys to the sealing power. Joseph F. Smith and Heber J. Grant on numerous occasions testified that that key is not in the Church and they even claimed that no man on earth held them.<sup>2</sup> When in order, this sealing key "pertains exclusively to the First Presidency of the Church."<sup>3</sup> But this has not been the Order since the 1880's when President Taylor set apart hundreds of men, by his own testimony, to perform these sealings in addition to the Twelve.<sup>4</sup> These keys pertain to the Apostleship and is so stated by President Cannon in the above reference, as well as to whomsoever is delegated this authority by those holding the keys. At the death of the keyholder, or at his command, all delegated authority is suspended. Since the Apostleship is not a delegated authority, the above mentioned suspension excludes Apostolic authority, hence the problem the monogamist Apostles were having with John W. Taylor and Mathias F. Cowley in the early 1900's. "You can't stop 'em unless you axe 'em; and once you axe 'em, nobody will listen to 'em!" The danger with axing them is that you also axe the thread that Harold B. Lee mentioned in 1972.<sup>5</sup> It is agreed that Priesthood keys have been restored "to be taken away no more forever"<sup>6</sup> and that the keys will be passed from Wilford

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1 *The Notes* 27.121; *Most Holy Principle* 1:335-6.

2 See *The Notes* 27.234; 27.235.

3 *Story*, Anderson, page 103.

4 See *The Notes* 28.83c.

5 See *Some That Trouble You*, page 87, also *Journal of Discourses* 4:434.

6 *Story*, Anderson, page 103; *Journal of Discourses* 13.164.

Woodruff to another Apostle “and another after him and so continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> But we also believe as Wilford Woodruff stated in 1888, even after he had been continuing the policy of stopping Plural Marriage in the Church, that Plural Marriage would not stop until the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>2</sup> And since “it is not mete that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood.”<sup>3</sup> we must look to a man who is living the Principles and therefore probably under a ban.<sup>4</sup> We know that Brother Joseph wanted Hyrum to be the President of the Church even while Joseph was still alive so he could devote himself to his other duties. The Elders objected to this and so it was never executed. Had it taken place as Joseph, and therefore the Lord, desired, we could have then seen a perfect example of the sealing keys pertaining to the First Presidency exclusively being directed by the one man on earth in the Church directing them to the Church. He in turn would be presided over by the one man on the earth who held those keys. This idea of all Apostles holding the same keys probably is new to most Mormons but Brother Anderson refers to it in *Story*, page 115.

The 1880 Revelation confirms that those Apostles held the keys in common. It is obvious that the level of the Apostleship in 1835 was not the same as that of 1845.

When asked when the Twelve received the keys of the kingdom and their charge to build that Kingdom on the foundation established by Joseph, the answer is always the Spring of 1844. Why not 1835? Because in 1835 they were not given all the keys. By the Spring of 1844 most of the Twelve had had an opportunity and were abiding the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage, or Plural Marriage and thus were eligible to receive the higher order of the Apostleship.<sup>5</sup> The monogamists today may still claim to be the Church's

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1 *Story*, Anderson, page 117; *Contributor* 10:382.

2 *Story*, Anderson, 27.71; 39.53.

3 1882 Revelation; *Messages of the First Presidency* 2:348; see *The Notes* 27.120.

4 See *Doctrine & Covenants* 52:14-16.

5 See *The Notes* 28.89; *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, page 336 where Elder Kimball was told to enter Plural Marriage or lose his Apostleship.



saviors as they did in 1884, but today they still do not qualify to hold all the keys or the presiding positions in the Priesthood as they also didn't in 1882. Note also that though the Pope might *claim* to be the true successor to Peter's keys, he does not qualify to hold that authority. For one important point, he has not been baptized though he would claim both the authority and the ordinance.

In *Story*, page 104 Brigham Young is quoted to the effect that a man may not embrace the law of celestial marriage except in his heart and be justified. This does *not* say that celestial marriage is not always essential as Brother Anderson tries to lead one to accept. Joseph Fielding Smith explained this very thoroughly in *Way to Perfection*, p. 207<sup>1</sup> where he states that to do the ordinary things in the Gospel will allow one to enter the Celestial Kingdom but he will go there as a servant. To become an heir and receive the fulness of that kingdom requires “other ordinances and obligations.”<sup>2</sup>

When viewing Brother Anderson's statements about the fiction of stopping Plural Marriage all over the Earth and the fact of stopping Plural Marriage in the Church, one is confused unless the entire perspective of the Priesthood of God is understood. Consider the following:

*Story*, page 104 (Brigham Young diminished PM starting in 1876),

*Story*, page 110,111 (John Taylor quietly refused to issue recommends),

*Story*, page 114 (1890 Manifesto was the official termination of Plural Marriage in the Church).

*Story*, page 120 (Lorenzo Snow's 1900 “unequivocal affirmation” that Plural Marriage ceased in Church throughout world in 1890),

*Story*, page 123, (1904 Manifesto was official and formal withdrawal of Plural Marriage).<sup>3</sup>

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1 See *The Notes* 25.15 as well as 25.12 and 25.13.

2 See *The Notes* 25.23.24. Also see 23.25,

3 The Student is directed to review *The Notes* 27.97 to 27.116, for the importance of these statements.

It must be kept in mind that there are always two levels in administration of the laws of the Gospel: First the Principle, and second, the policy. At times you find changes in the principle without changes in the public policy (see Plural Marriage in Kirtland in 1835, when Joseph took his first Plural Wife in Nauvoo, in 1841 when the Twelve were first commanded to enter that principle); at other times you have changes in the public policy without changes in the principle (see Salt Lake City in 1852 when Plural Marriage was taught to the entire Church and the world and the Church Policy was thus changed from monogamy to Plural Marriage, and again consider 1890 when Church policy was transferred back to Monogamy even when the principle was still being perpetuated by the First Presidency, i.e. President Woodruff had Elder Ivins set apart to seal Plural Marriages in Mexico October 5, 1895). The following diagram will aid in illustrating these conditions. The third part of the diagram shows how the practice of Plural Marriage has continued under Priesthood direction uninterrupted since the time the angel appeared to Joseph in 1835 and commanded him to enter or perish.

**Marriage Principle**

| 1835                              |                                | 1852                             | 1890                           |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <div>M</div> <div>Mono gamy</div> | <div>P<sub>olygamy</sub></div> | <div>P</div> <div>Polygamy</div> | <div>P<sub>olygamy</sub></div> |
|                                   | <div>M<sub>onogamy</sub></div> |                                  | <div>M<sub>onogamy</sub></div> |

**Church Policy**

| 1852                             | 1890                             |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <div>M</div> <div>Monogamy</div> | <div>P</div> <div>Polygamy</div> |
|                                  | <div>M</div> <div>Monogamy</div> |

It has been before stated in this Review that there are

many similarities to the writings and attacks Brother Anderson launches to those made by the Tanners on the Church. One of Brother Anderson's main attacks in both of his books is upon the Lorin C. Woolley Story. This should not be surprising because one of the principle attacks on Mormonism is the Joseph Smith Story. They could also be broadened to draw parallels in the New and Old Testament. Bible Archaeologists have yet to put Abraham in his proper milieu, the controversy as to the universal or local flood still rages even today, and the Search for the historic Jesus is not complete. Let me illustrate some basic objection raised to the Joseph Smith and the Lorin C. Woolley Stories. The listing of these does not imply that they are without reply nor that they are valid or even honest objections only that they are made by their enemies. And to show that Brother Joseph's Story had many of the same problems and characteristics that, say, Mark or John exhibited in their narration does not imply the truthfulness of Joseph's story as such. It simply chronicles that men in similar offices holding similar authority exhibit similar characteristics when describing precious parts of the Gospel to the world. The problems that exist in the volumes of scripture show that the Spirit of the Lord allows sufficient to be included to support even the unbelief of the children of men. Problems cause the faithful to dig deeper into the record than they would otherwise if their faith were not being tried. See an excellent description of this principle applied to the Bible and its various problems in John W. Haley's *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*. On pages 30 through 38 he lists 6 reasons for discrepancies:

- (1) to stimulate intellect,
- (2) induce men to investigate Truth,
- (3) analogue in nature, as in storms, disease, etc,
- (4) show that there is no conspiracy,
- (5) make us value the Spirit rather than the letter,
- (6) test our moral character.

This volume ought to be obtained and studied by the

Student carefully, not to find supposed error in Scripture, but to illustrated the problems that confront faith at every layer of the Onion of Truth.

## Comparison Between the Smith and Woolley Stories

*[According to the critics]*

| Joseph Smith's Story                      | Lorin C. Woolley's Story                  |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. If fabricated, why so many details?    | 1. If fabricated, why so many details?    |
| 2. Lane not at Palmyra in 1820            | 2. JT not at Carlisle                     |
| 3. 1820 Revival doesn't exist             | 3. 1886 confiscation doesn't exist        |
| 4. Confusion of revivals                  | 4. Confusion of Manifestos                |
| 5. JS tried to join Methodists 1828       | 5 JWW plead to be reinstated              |
| 6. Smiths didn't take 1820 seriously      | 6. JWW didn't take 1886 seriously         |
| 7. JS cut off for unchristian life        | 7. LCW excommunicated for pernicious lies |
| 8. JS Vision first pub. 1842              | 8. LCW account first pub. 1929            |
| 9. JS never used Vision in writings       | 9. JWW never mentioned 1886 Revelation    |
| 10. JS Vision made up years later         | 10. LCW account made up years later       |
| 11. Vision never told to Church 1830's    | 11. story not told until 1920             |
| 12. Other theophanies around JS           | 12. others claiming like LCW              |
| 13. Not Lane or Stockton                  | 13. Not Southridge                        |
| 14. Contradicts Law of Common Consent     | 14. Contradicts D&C 84                    |
| 15. No records to confirm - left to faith | 15. No records to confirm - left to faith |
| 16. Tanner doubt honesty of all Elders!   | 16. Max doubts honesty of LCW & JWW       |

In *Story*, page 2 we read, "It [the Lorin C. Woolley

story] is of primary importance, ...” In *Fundamentalism*, Page 6, it reads, “It is of primary importance, therefore, if the Fundamentalist movement is to be successfully challenged, that the Lorin Woolley story be examined, analyzed and compared with contemporary records. The Lorin Woolley story comes in several heterogeneous versions.” Elder John A. Widtsoe has said, “The First Vision of 1820 is of first importance in the history of Joseph Smith. Upon its reality rests the truth and value of his subsequent work.”<sup>1</sup>

Jerald Tanner has written thus: “If God the Father had actually appeared in this vision, Joseph Smith certainly would have included this information in his first account. It is absolutely impossible for us to believe that Joseph Smith would not have mentioned the Father if He had actually appeared. The only reasonable explanation for the Father not being mentioned is that Joseph Smith did *not* see God the Father, and that he made up this part of the story after he dictated the first manuscript. This, of course, throws a shadow of doubt upon the whole story.”<sup>2</sup> The story would probably have been “impossible to believe” for Mr. Tanner, even if Brother Joseph had included those details in his earliest account. Also, one man's “only reasonable explanation” is another man's “one of many explanations!” These statements are reviewed here to show that these accounts are important, but also that there are problems involved with them with which one's faith must grapple. Similar comments could be quoted concerning the New Testament accounts that were written 30 to 60 years after the event, and after most of those immediately involved were dead. In the transferal of Priesthood keys on the Mount of Transfiguration there were not witnesses to that event and no written record.<sup>3</sup>

I will now present for your consideration a brief summary of:

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1 *Joseph Smith Seeker After Truth*, Widtsoe, page 19.

2 *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?*, Tanner, page 147.

3 *The Notes* 28.102A.

## Variations in the First Vision Accounts

| Time        | Persons                     | Summary                                            |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1831-32     | F. G. Williams              | I saw the Lord, 1 person (Jesus)                   |
| 1835 Feb    | MA (OC, JS)                 | A personage sent from the Lord                     |
| 1835 Nov 9  | Joshua, W. Cowdery, JS      | 2 persons “testified Jesus was Son of God”         |
| 1835 Nov 16 | Erastus Holmes              | Saw visitation of angels                           |
| 1840        | OP Pamphlet                 | 2 personages, exactly resemble                     |
| 1841 Mar    | Wentworth letter            | 2 personages, exactly resemble                     |
| 1842        | T&S 3:728-29                | 2 personages, God & Jesus                          |
| 1842        | OH, German pamphlet         | 2 personages, exactly resemble                     |
| 1843        | Gazette (JS interview)      | 2 glorious personages, 1 <sup>st</sup> intros. Son |
| 1855        | BY, JD 2:171                | God didn’t come, sent angel                        |
| 1858 ?      | HCK, JD 6:27                | God didn’t come, sent angel                        |
| 1868        | GAS, JD 12:334-35           | Holy angel said all were wrong                     |
| 1879        | JT, JD 20:167               | Joseph asked the angel                             |
| 1879        | JT, JD 21:161-63            | Lord revealed Himself and Son to Joseph            |
| 1883        | Wm. Smith                   | Angel appeared                                     |
| 1883        | Neibaur (maybe 1844)        | 1 person, then another, Father intro.              |
| 1890        | Edward Stevens (maybe 1834) | Joseph told him an angel came to him               |

The witnesses to those events that are vital to one's salvation are ever tenuous and at times contradictory. It could not be otherwise and leave men the agency to believe or not

believe. The evidence *cannot* be overpowering except as given to the faithful in consequence to his sincere seeking after The Way and the Truth. No matter what proofs are given or what evidence is presented to you, in the long run it remains you who has to make the decision as to what is Truth. It is you who must go to the Lord in fasting and prayer. It is you who must detect the answer. It is you who will be judged as to how you act when the answers are given to you. It is you who must determine if the answers come from the Devil, from your own carnal desires, or from the Lord. Your eternal welfare is at stake in these matters.

Thus we have seen in this work by J. Max Anderson many proofs and confirmations to our faith and practice since 1886. There is much Fact to strengthen one's faith in the Fulness of the Gospel and we find it presented in some of the most unlikely places. Unfortunately there is also much fiction in books like *The Polygamy Story* that is put there in an attempt to convince LDS that the Roman system of Monogamy was really the best way after all. Even though we are taught that Heavenly Father's family is Patriarchal, and during the Millennium when men again are righteous, the Church will return to Plural Marriage. In spite of all these facts, Mormons love books like *Polygamy Story* because it makes them feel secure believing that in 1890 they chose the better way and preserved the Church and all the other few were wrong when they continued living the laws and ordinances of God. And who doesn't like to be told over and over again that you are right, in spite of what the scriptures and prophets and apostles have said!

“And there are none that doeth good except those who are ready to receive the fulness of my Gospel, which I have sent forth unto this generation.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 35:12.*)

“He that receiveth my law and doeth it (*the Fundamentalists?*), the same is my disciple; and he that saith he receiveth it and doeth it not (*the LDS after*

1890), the same is not my disciple.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 41:5.)

And if Brother Max Anderson in *Polygamy Story* isn't in every page saying, “we Latter-Day Saints believe in Plural Marriage with all our heart, but we just won't do it”, the reviewer of this volume missed the point made by 157 pages.



## Samuel W. Taylor letter

*14 February 1980*

Dear S ...,

I got the three boxes of material, and I've got to admit that this is the high-water mark in the literature of the Mormon apologist. It is hard to believe that someone like Max Anderson would be so completely lacking in integrity in examining the evidence. But what really boggles me is how he could spend the time and effort on these manuscripts, which literally fit the definition of pornography, being utterly and completely devoid of any redeeming feature.

Of course I realize that he thinks he is protecting the faith: but it is apparent at a glance that he is not a scholar at all. His thesis is that the official mythology is completely true to the last comma, and that any evidence to the contrary is nothing but apostate lies from the minions of Satan.

It is really too bad that he didn't have just a little integrity. Inasmuch as I grew up in a plural family, and my father sacrificed high church position and his membership for the Principle; inasmuch as I interviewed my father's wives in depth; inasmuch as I have made notes on interviews with many old-timers and modern polygamists; and inasmuch as I have seven books and considerable shorter material on the subject - in view of this, I would consider myself something of an expert.

Yet I don't know where to begin in trying to evaluate Max Anderson's material. It is like trying to criticize home movies as compared to a Hollywood motion picture. There is no meeting ground for me and Max Anderson. His material is, from a historian's viewpoint, completely unreliable and worthless.

But what really surprised me was that Dean Jesse accepted Max Anderson at face value. I've never met him; but I had seen reference to his work on the Fundamentalists and I

assumed it was based on scholarship. It is amazing that anyone working in the Church Historical Dept. wouldn't know better, wouldn't know that Anderson's stuff was complete trash. The unfortunate part is that Dean Jessee was in a position to know, and certainly he did know, what was what, but that he, also, said what was expected of him.

I really don't think that deliberate distortion of the facts by so-called historians does the Church any good. It is actually a dangerous practice; it lays us open to being demolished by the simple truth. Nobody's faith is bolstered by the realization that the truth doesn't come from Salt Lake.

Best,

*[Signed]* Samuel Taylor

## Ogden Kraut Letter

*16 September 1979*

Dear Max:

The other day I read your book "The Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact" I decided to write and commend you for your achievement in offering a very academic and necessary provision for the kind of society that we live in.

However, the refutation of statements or contradiction of details does not prove that an event has not transpired. Courts often listen to eye witnesses all giving conflicting testimony of what happened at the scene of an accident. This is also true of religious history. For instance: the numerous and conflicting stories of Joseph Smith's first vision (which by the way, did not appear in print until many years after the event transpired) is not proof that such a vision did not occur. Neither does our Book of Mormon with its 2000 changes from the 1830 edition prove that it was not translated from gold plates. The atheists point to the fact that four different disciples of Jesus gave four different versions of what was written on the cross upon which Christ was crucified. Does this prove that Christ was not crucified, or that the atonement is not a valid doctrine?

But the crucifixion of Christ, the First Vision, the Book of Mormon, the doctrines of Deity and celestial marriage as taught by Joseph Smith are true in spite of all the conflicts, misstatements, changes, or revisions that other men have conjured up. Many details in dates, descriptions, testimonies or texts are often discredited, but they do not change the validity of the events or doctrines.

Darwin questioned the Bible with considerable evidence, Gerald Tanner questioned the reality or shadow of Mormonism with a preponderance of similar kinds of conclusions, and Mark Petersen is still questioning "Adam, Who is He?" with the same literary demonstrations. But the

atheists, the Tanners, the Petersens or Andersons cannot change fact into fiction, or fiction into fact. The truth or validity of events or doctrines remain the same.

But there is a need for these contradictory works. By these means, weak or faithless men might justify their refusal to obey certain doctrines and ordinances of the fullness of the Gospel. Paul the Apostle said that even "God shall send them strong delusions" - the reason He would do that is so that "all might be damned who believe not the truth." (*2 Thes. 2:11-12*) So, God not only allows, but also provides the means of deception, for both truth and error, so that men might believe a lie because they want to. All such literary works that discredit actual history or correct doctrine only prove the human weakness and the unreliability of men; which is a most important factor in the realm of religion anyway.

When I recently asked a friend of mine if he had read your book, he replied, "Why should I? I heard that story from three of the men who were at that meeting!" I also know others who bear a similar testimony. So, although you begin your book with "The Lorin Woolley Story," and continue with it to the end, it really isn't Lorin Woolley's story. Neither does it matter. The correctness or validity of his story has nothing to do with the fiction or fact of the Law of Celestial Marriage. The truth of Celestial or Plural Marriage will continue on through the eternities in spite of all the man-handling, contradictions or opposition by mortal man.

By the way, when you stated that "President Wilford Woodruff issued his now famous 'Manifesto' publicly declaring an end to the practice of polygamy in the Church," I really thought you knew better. If you would take another ten years to write the facts behind the Manifesto, you would acquire many volumes of contradictions to that statement. I could loan you a few volumes of my own collection to start you out. If your statement is true, then the presidents Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant - and a host of apostles in the Church did not know about it.

What should be done when we are faced with so many conflicting details in history? Exactly what should have been

done in the first place: seek and obtain a personal witness or testimony of the truth. But not many do.

For these reasons many are called but only a few are chosen. Few men ever know the true God, and in the final analysis will be able to say that they followed the admonition of Christ by doing “the works of Abraham”, but then, quality is better than quantity anyway.

Again, I commend you for your literary achievement.

Sincerely,

*[Signed]* Ogden Kraut



# **Appendix**

## **Additional Testimonies of Joseph Smith's Resurrection**

### **Additional Accounts of the 1886 Meeting**

#### **An Uninterrupted Line of Authority**

##### **1886 – A Poetic Retelling**

*Note: “An Uninterrupted Line ...” was not originally written for this book, but covers one aspect of Priesthood being lost in greater depth than the chapter, “Losing the Priesthood”, so it has been included here for those interested.*

## **Additional Testimonies of Joseph Smith's Resurrection**

### **Brigham Young – 1857**

– women claim to have seen resurrected Joseph Smith

“As quick as Joseph ascends to His Father and God, he will get a commission to this earth again, and I shall be the first woman that he will manifest himself to.<sup>1</sup> I was going to say first man, but there are so many women who profess to have seen him,<sup>2</sup> that I thought I would say woman.”

*(Journal of Discourses 4:286, 1857.)*

### **Addison Everett – Before 1877**

– Shook hands with the Prophet Joseph in the temple

“Brother Addison Everett was very sick, nigh unto death at a time when the temple was being finished; and one night in a dream or vision he was sent to the temple by some who told him that Joseph the Prophet wanted to see him.

He went immediately and found there Joseph and Hyrum, Joseph shook hands with him ...”

*(Oliver B. Huntington recollections, p. 8)*

### **Lizzie Smith – 1879**

“she was working in the temple for the dead and while thus employed she saw the Prophet Joseph Smith plainly and distinctly.”

*(Oliver B. Huntington recollections, p. 7-8)*

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- 1 Brigham had said ten years earlier that, “we should yet have Brothers Joseph and Hyrum and many of the Saints in their resurrected bodies with us on earth.” (30 July 1847, *Wilford Woodruff Journal* 3:244)
  - 2 Interestingly the resurrected Jesus first showed himself to women – Luke 23:55 – 24:11.



## **The Lord – 1882**

“My servant Joseph ... yet lives, and is with me where I am.”

*(Revelation to John Taylor, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1882,  
Unpublished Revelations 81:13-19)*

## **William H. Hill – 1885**

– Joseph visits John Taylor at the Hill home

“While at the Hill house he dedicated the place as one of safety from Brother and Sister Hill and family, and their posterity; and while he was there he was visited at least once by Joseph Smith, the Prophet.”

*(See Hill manuscript,<sup>1</sup> LDS Church Archives)*

## **Alfred Carlisle – 1885-86**

– Joseph Smith visits John Taylor in the Carlisle home

“One night he was asked by President Taylor to stand guard at the upstairs bedroom where he was going to spend the night. He entered the room alone and bolted the door from the inside. It had a heavy bolt lock that was on the door many years later when I lived in the home. During the night it sounded as if two people were talking in the room. When President Taylor came out alone the next morning my uncle told him about hearing voices. He told him he had been conversing with the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

*(Submitted to LDS Archives, April 1978)*

## **Philo Dibble – Summer 1886**

“Went to the High Priests meeting held in the Font house. Philo Dibble spoke of this being the resurrection day. And

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<sup>1</sup> The William Hill family records also include the testimony of Barbara O. Kelsch that “While in hiding [in the Hill home, John Taylor] was visited by the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

that Joseph Smith had been to Pres. John Taylor and conversed with him in his body about this crusade against us, and that he felt grieved at the course his son Joseph [III] was taking.”

*(John Moon Clements journal, 31 July 1886)*

### **Lorin Woolley – September 1886**

“Elder [Lorin] Woolley testified that he knew the Prophets Joseph, Brigham and Heber lived, for he had seen them as they appeared to President John Taylor in brother John Woolley’s house.”

*(Andrew Kimball Journal, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1897.)*

### **Marriner W. Merrill – By 1887**

“The last time I met Pres. Taylor he said to me: ‘I may never see you again and I want to tell you that I have seen the Prophet Joseph who said the Lord did not want His people to be concerned about the raid or inquire when it would cease. ‘It will stop in mine own due time,’ said the Lord. Joseph, however, said it made him ‘sad to see his own son trying to tear down what he had given his life to establish.’”

*(Abraham H. Cannon Journal, July 7th, 1891,  
Special Collections, University of Utah Library)*

### **Peter Johnson – 8<sup>th</sup> August 1898**

[During his visit to the spirit world he was told he would yet be a missionary there under the direction of Joseph Smith:]  
“This remark brought to my mind a question which has much been discussed here, as to whether or not the Prophet Joseph is now a resurrected being. While I did not ask the question, they read it in my mind, and immediately said: ‘You wish to know whether the Prophet has his body or not?’ I replied: ‘Yes, I would like to know.’ I was told that the Prophet Joseph Smith has his body, as also his brother Hyrum, ...”

*(Relief Society Magazine 7:451-2)*

**Patriarch Harrison Sperry – *Before 1922***

“Patriarch Sperry was present. He and Brother Woolley have both seen the Prophet Joseph Smith and had much experience in the Church.”

*(Nathaniel Baldwin Diary, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1922)*

# “In the Mouth of Two or Three Witnesses” Additional Accounts of the 1886 Meeting

## John Woolley

| <i>Witness / Related to</i> | <i>Date Related / Recorded</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| to Edwin Woolley            | 1918 / 1920                    |
| to Joseph Lyman Jessop      | Apr 1923                       |
| to LeRoy S. Johnson         | 1928 / 1963+                   |
| to Price W. Johnson         | before death / later           |

## Lorin Woolley

|                                          |                         |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| to George E. Woolley                     | Sept 1891 / 1921        |
| to Nellie Taylor                         | 1893 / later            |
| to Andrew Kimball                        | Jan 1897                |
| to B. Harvey Allred                      | Mar 1897                |
| to Joseph Musser                         | Around 1907             |
| <b>First Affidavit</b>                   | Oct 1912                |
| Moroni Jessop Interview                  | 1922/3 / 1942           |
| B. Harvey Allred Rendition               | 1925? / pub '33         |
| <b>Full &amp; Final Account</b>          | 1929                    |
| to William Kay                           | 1931                    |
| Calvin Woolley<br>& Olive Woolley Coombs | before his death / 1975 |
| Louis Kelsch / Sallee Jessop             | before his death / 1997 |

## Daniel R. Bateman

|                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| to Joseph Musser         | Mar 1922, see Journal |
| to Joseph Lyman Jessop   | Mar 1923              |
| <b>Affidavit</b>         | May 1934              |
| <b>Another Affidavit</b> | Mar 1938              |

### **Samuel Bateman**

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| to John Whitaker ?       | 16 Sept 1888       |
| to Reginald P. Finlayson | 1898 / 1991        |
| to Olive K. Neilson      | before 1911 / 1944 |
| to E. Bateman            | before 1911 / 1996 |

### **John W. Taylor**

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| to Abraham Cannon       | Sept 1890 & Mar 1892 |
| John W. / Nellie Taylor | before 1917 / 1934   |
| Family Kingdom          | before death / later |

### **George Earl**

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Rhea Kunz                  | Dec 1928 / later |
| Various inc. Joseph Musser | Nov 1936         |
| Morris Kunz                | Dec 1936         |

### **Others**

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Abraham Woodruff to A.B. Irvine | Oct 1904     |
| Mission Pres to Francis Lyman   | Oct 1906     |
| G. Q. Cannon to Joseph Musser   | 1898? / 1942 |
| Recollection of Aged Man        | June 1943    |
| Joseph F. Smith to B. H. Allred | 1918 / 1996  |
| Reed C. Durham                  | Feb 1974     |

*Note: I have left out some accounts of John Taylor's teachings after the meeting and the setting apart of Joseph F. Smith upon his return.*

## John Woolley

Thou wilt obtain blessings, glory and honour, and through it thou wilt receive keys, world of knowledge and power, and thou wilt be called the Lord's anointed.

*Joseph Smith, Sr.; John W. Woolley's patriarchal blessing, Spring 1839*

John told me that within two months of President Smith's death [1918] President Smith told him to go ahead in his mission of sealing plural marriages.

*Edwin D. Woolley Jr. Reminiscence dictated to Elizabeth Woolley Jensen, March 1920.*

Met a most distinguished man of whom I have heard much - Brother John Woolley of Centerville who is the eldest (senior) member of the Church living. He is also an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, having been ordained to such by Pres. John Taylor. He was a personal friend of the prophet Joseph Smith and Pres. Jos. F. as well. He is 91 years old and still 'hale and hearty' and is the father of Bro. Lorin Woolley of whom much will be said in the future.

*Joseph Lyman Jessop Journal, 8 April 1923.*

In 1928, I had the privilege of visiting John W. Woolley, and hearing his testimony."

*Sermons of LeRoy S. Johnson 5:241, 18 March 1962*

...

I did visit John W. Woolley in his home about a month before he passed away in 1928. I was introduced to him by my brother, Price, who was acquainted with John W. We shook hands with him and then he told us to sit down. Then he looked at me for a few moments, it seemed like for some time, without saying anything. Finally, he says, "Young man, get up and come over here. I want to feel your hand again." So, I went back and shook hands with him. I took him by the hand, looked him in the face, and if you ever saw John W. Woolley you saw a man that could, with those little eyes he had - look a hole through you. In a little while, I didn't know whether to shake or to stand firm. He finally spoke. And he said, "You'll do, my boy, you'll do."

*Sermons of LSJ 4:1370, 17 April 1977*

...

“He told me to go and sit down, and I did. He says, “Now I know that I am among friends.” And he opened up and told me of the revelation of 1886 and the eight-hour meeting.”

*Sermons of LSJ 4:1576, 3 June 1978*

...

“1928 was the first time I ever heard anyone say that there was a difference between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Priesthood of the living God. That was the first time I ever heard that expression.”

*Sermons of LSJ 4:1686, 14 Jan 1979, Other Accounts (in Sermons of LSJ) – 19 Sep. 1971 (1:341), 16 Dec 1973 (3:800), 7 Sep 1975 (7:246), 8 Aug 1976 (4:1256), 8 Jan. 1978 (4:1504),*

[John W. Woolley] took me [Price W. Johnson] into the room on the south where the Savior and Joseph Smith in his resurrected body had their long interview with John Taylor on the night of September 26, 1886. John Woolley said, “This is the room where the Savior and Joseph Smith visited. The couch over there is where they sat. The Savior was here until midnight; Joseph Smith stayed until morning ....” Brother Woolley told me about the meeting the next morning; he told me the whole story which is written.

*Reminiscences of John W. Woolley and Lorin C. Woolley, Vol. 2:5-6*

At Centerville, Davis County, Utah, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, A.D. 1914, Pres. Francis M. Lyman and Anthony W. Ivins called at my home, and in answer to questions asked I made the following statement: Some months ago I met Mathias F. Cowley on the street and he asked me if I was familiar with the Sealing Ceremony. I told him I was. He said, “If any good men come to you don’t turn them down.”

I believe from that statement that it was still proper that plural marriages be solemnized and that President Smith had authorized Cowley to instruct me.

Since that time, I have married wives to Nathan G. Clark, Joseph A. Silver, Rheuben G. Miller, and P.K. Lemmon Jr.

The ceremony in the case of Miller was performed in the S.E. part of Salt Lake, the woman being a widow whose name I do not know. The Lemmon ceremony was in Centerville, the name of the woman, I think, being Johnson.

John W. Woolley

## Lorin Woolley

... Lorin related to me certain things that happened at his father's house when President Taylor was making his headquarters there during the Crusade. He told me of President Taylor coming from his room one morning with a halo about him & they could scarcely look upon him. That this light remained about his person most of the day gradually fading as the day advanced. That President Taylor announced that he had been with the Prophet Joseph all night, as I recall Loren's statement and I was with him for a long time.

*22 September 1891, Letter of George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 20 May 1921.*

Lorin said that right next door on the adjoining farm of John W. Woolley, President John Taylor was in hiding the night of September 26, 1886, when he received a revelation concerning the Principle and set men apart to continue it regardless of what the Church might do officially on the matter. Lorin said that he was one of the men set apart.

*1893, Nettie Taylor, Family Kingdom by Samuel W. Taylor, 1951, p. 72*

Elder [Lorin] Woolley testified that he knew the Prophets Joseph, Brigham and Heber lived for he had seen them as they appeared to President John Taylor in brother John Woolley's house.

*25 January 1897, Andrew Kimball (President of Indian Territory Mission, father of Spencer W. Kimball) Journal.*

... in the evening we attended Church. Elder L.C. Woolley spoke of the power and authority of the Priesthood bearing a great testimony to the people of the divine calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith; saying he had seen him personally since his, the Prophet's death.

*28 March 1897, B. Harvey Allred Journal.*

Joseph W. [Musser] met Lorin Woolley about 1907 at [the] Baldwin Radio Plant, who related the meeting of Sept. 27, 1886.  
*Polygamy Story, J. Max Anderson, Chapter 1, footnote 6.*



In the latter part of September, 1886, the exact day being not now known to me, President John Taylor was staying at the home of my father, John W. Woolley, in Centerville, Davis County, Utah.

At the particular time herein referred to, President Taylor was in hiding (on the under-ground). Charles H. Bearrell and I were the “guardsmen” on watch for the protection of the President. Two were usually selected each night, and they took turns standing guard to protect the President from trespass or approaching danger. Exceptional activity was exercised by the U. S. Federal Officers in their prosecutions of the Mormon people on account of their family relations in supposed violation of the Federal Laws.

Soon after our watch began, Charles H. Bearrell reclined on a pallet and went to sleep. President Taylor had entered the south room to retire for the night. There was no door-way entrance to the room occupied by President Taylor, except the entrance from the room occupied by the guardsmen. Soon after 9 o'clock, I heard the voice of another man engaged in conversation with President Taylor, and I observed that a very brilliant light was illuminating the room occupied by the President. I wakened Bearrell and told him what I had heard and seen, and we both remained awake and on watch the balance of the night. The conversation was carried on all night between President Taylor and the *visitor*, and never discontinued until the day began to dawn – when it ceased and the light disappeared. We heard the voices in conversation while the conference continued and we saw the light.

My father came into the room where we were on watch, and was there when President Taylor came into the room that morning. As the President entered the room he remarked, “I had a very pleasant conversation all night with the Prophet Joseph.” At the time President Taylor entered the room his countenance was very bright and could be seen for several hours after. After observing that some one was in conversation with the President, I went out and examined all of the windows, and found them fastened as usual.

The brethren were considerably agitated about this time over the agitation about Plural Marriage, and some were insisting that the Church issue some kind of edict to be used in Congress, concerning the surrendering of Plural Marriage, and that if some policy were not adopted to relieve the strain the government would force the Church to surrender. Much was said in their deliberations for and against some edict or manifesto that had been prepared, and

at a meeting that afternoon,\* at which a number there were present and myself, I heard President Taylor say; "Brethren, I will suffer my right hand to be cut off before I will sign such a document."

I, Lorin C. Woolley, of Centerville, Utah, do hereby certify, that I have carefully made and read the foregoing statement of facts and the same is true to the best of my knowledge. Dated this 6th day of October, 1912.

*(signed) Lorin C. Woolley*

*\* The original (before alteration) read as follows: "Much was said in their deliberation for and against some edict or manifesto that had been prepared, and at a meeting that afternoon, at which there were present: George Q. Cannon, John T. Caine, Hiram B. Clawson, Charles H. Wilcken, John W. Woolley and myself, I heard President Taylor say ..."*

President Taylor placed his hand on (Brother Woolleys) head and ordained him an apostle and gave him a certain mission to perform with relation to Celestial Marriage, the words being dictated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, who stood by President Taylor's side.

*Joseph Musser Journal, June 14th, 1922.*

Some cried one thing and some another as reason why this despised doctrine should be abolished. They talked, pleaded, reasoned, cajoled, and even threatened. Even from high places within and without the Church, pressure was brought to bear in almost every conceivable form. This feeling had assumed such proportions in the closing days of President John Taylor's life, that he was prevailed upon again to inquire of the Lord, that they might know if some way could not be had of the Lord to relieve the suffering saints, and meet the demands of the persistent.

At that time, and for many months prior to it, President John Taylor had, because of his years, been one of the most keen sufferers. He and a goodly number of the church leaders, hundreds of faithful men and women were in hiding, to escape the fury of the law enforced by men so unclean their foul minds and bodies would desecrate the air these hounded Saints would breathe.

At the time President John Taylor was concealed and guarded in the home of a trusted fellow church member.

The writer, with his father, was driving and guarding many men and women, fellow sufferers with President Taylor, at that time, in northern Utah and southern Idaho. Night and day our vigilance

knew no end and no disappointments.

September 26, 1886, George Q. Cannon and two other apostles were visitors of President Taylor that and the previous day. Other trusted brethren were with them a portion of that time. George Q. Cannon and some of the visiting brethren called on President Taylor that day for the purpose of conveying to him some of these demands for cessation of the teaching and practice of plural marriage. George Q. Cannon had with him a document very similar to the manifesto presented and approved fourteen years later. This instrument had been prepared by some of the most bitter opponents of this doctrine, members and nonmembers of the Church, with slight assistance from two of the faithful brethren. Some of these not only asked but demanded President Taylor's signature to that paper.

The contents of that document, and the requests and demands constantly coming in from other sources, were the subjects under almost constant consideration. George Q. Cannon and one of the other apostles present importuned President Taylor to obtain the will of the Lord on the matter. To this he consented, and preparation was made to that end.

The day previous, or early that morning a man who had served his shift almost constantly for many months in guarding President Taylor, was sent to convey and guard Apostle Brigham Young to a place of concealment in the mountain valleys north and east of Salt Lake. In the late afternoon of September 26, he returned to his home and post of duty, tired and worn.

He sought his bed in early evening, that he might be prepared for his watch as guard of President Taylor at midnight. He had hardly retired until a messenger came from President Taylor asking his attendance at the rooms of his concealment. When this brother arrived there President Taylor told him that he realized he was very tired and was much in need of rest, but he was desirous that he should take position as his special guard that night, and let the other guard take his place in the next shift. The guard gladly acquiesced in President Taylor's wishes and immediately set about to see that all windows and doors were properly darkened and locked fast.

President Taylor occupied a room with a door opening into the main living room, but without an outside place of entrance. President Taylor retired to his room at about the usual hour. The guard sat and reclined upon a seat a little to the side of President

Taylor's door and between it and the outside door of the room in which he was stationed as guard. Occasionally he would walk out and around the premises. All lights had been extinguished in the house. The guard who ordinarily would have been on watch at that time was lying down and most of the time asleep, on a lounge in the same room occupied by the guard on duty.

Shortly before the hour of midnight the attending guard was startled by the sound of voices in John Taylor's room, and a bright light shooting out under the closed door into the room in which he sat. He awoke the sleeping guard and in a hushed voice called his attention to the voices in the adjacent room and to the light along the floor. He at first became alarmed, with fear that some unwelcome visitor had gained access to President Taylor's room of concealment. He told the awakened guard to stand at watch while he went out and around the house to the only window of John Taylor's room. With guarded silence he rapidly made his way to the window, and while he could distinctly hear the voices from within, and see small shafts of light from the room, he began feeling up and about the window shutters he had so securely nailed down, to learn if someone had broken the fastenings. Before he had proceeded far in this feeling search, a voice whispered peace to him and told him to retire to his watch for all was well.

He did as he was bade. For some time the two men sat in rapt awe and silence. Finally a third voice was distinctly heard in conversation with the two that had been heard there for some time now past.

Members of the family, two, I think, were called to witness these things. At just what time or period of the occurrence I do not recall. Before morning one of the voices ceased to be heard, but two remained in constant and earnest conversation.

Just before dawn the sound of voices ceased entirely. By this time four or five men and one woman had reached the room and witnessed the bright light and sound of voices in conversation. As light began to dawn in the east, John Taylor came from his room surrounded by a thin halo of light. When he greeted the assembled brethren and sister, the guard, ever loved and trusted by President Taylor, said in hushed voice, "President Taylor, we heard voices in your room and became alarmed."

"Yes, my boy," he replied, "I have been talking with Brother Joseph."

"But, we distinctly heard three voices," the guard said.

“Was there not a third person in the room with you ?”

“Yes, it was our Master and our Lord,” was President Taylor's solemn answer.

Within a few minutes fourteen men and women had assembled, and were sitting in profound silence about the room. Soon President Taylor arose, and at first standing by a table near the center of the room, began to address them. For eight happy hours that godly man addressed that body of men and women. A part of the time he stood in midair, with feet considerable distance from the floor, and his head surrounded with a halo of light.

He told of his converse with the Prophet Joseph and his Lord, of much of the instruction he had received. Apostle George Q. Cannon was one of the assembly. President Taylor took in his hand the document he had been requested to sign the previous day, and holding it out at arm's length before him spoke words to this effect: “I would suffer that arm to be drawn from its socket and my tongue by its roots from my mouth before I would sign that thing. It must remain for my successor to do that.”

John Taylor delivered the word of the Lord in mighty power, during the hours he stood before that favored few. He uttered several prophecies pertaining to the winding-up scene before the coming of Jesus Christ in His glory, in one of which he said, that prior to that time the Saints would be fully tried that the Lord might know who His chosen people would be. At that time one-half of the professing members of the Church, “Yes, and one-half of that half,” said he will turn away from God.

This prophecy was many times re-predicted by his worthy son, John W. Taylor, throughout many sections of the Church, and many Saints live today who were thrilled with the mighty power in which John W. Taylor restated his father's prophecies. ...

John Taylor prophesied, among other things, that the time was near at hand when the Church with some of its leaders, would hate, pursue, persecute and excommunicate those who dared to teach or practice the law of plural marriage, for which he and hundreds of his brethren and sisters were then in hiding. Yet, not one year should pass before the coming of Jesus Christ, in which children would not be born under the holy covenant of the Patriarchal Order of Marriage.

He ordained and set apart five men of that assembly, conferring power and authority to unite faithful men and women in this Order of the Holy Priesthood, and to seal those covenants and

promises by the Holy Spirit of Promise. These men were instructed to go into different stakes throughout the Church and ordain other men to the same power and calling. By the authority of the keys and powers of his apostolic and high priesthood presidency calling, he conferred upon those men those rights and powers; and said it would never be taken from the earth until Christ came whose right it was to rule and reign.

Notwithstanding the fact that some men upon whom this sealing power was conferred, have been excommunicated when discovered to have exercised those powers of the high priesthood, and all others have been declared, from the great Tabernacle pulpit and from the press, by the present President of the Church, to possess no rights or authority to solemnize such marriages, some of those men continue to exercise those sealing powers in all righteousness. No act of mortal man, other than their own unworthiness, can deprive them of that authority conferred upon them by divine injunction, or stop the carrying out of God's purposes, as predicted by John Taylor. Neither they nor those for whom they righteously officiate can be derived of their sacred rights, or cut off from Christ's Church by the words or acts of men unrighteously exercised. ...

At the time of the visit of our Lord and His Prophet Joseph Smith the following revelation of the will of God was received and declared by President John Taylor.

*[Quotes 1886 Revelation]*

Several copies of this revelation were made at the time. The original is in President John Taylor's own hand writing, and said to be in the church historian's office. This statement has been made both publicly and privately, and by the press for several years past, and if a denial of these things has ever been made by one supposed to be responsible for the custody of that revelation, we have never heard or read of it. If these things are true who is responsible for their long withholding? If they are not true why are they not authoritatively and effectually denied?

The writer obtained the information as above given from two eye and ear witnesses of the event, and that testimony was borne in the name of the Lord and in mighty power, in the presence of three other hearers, and by him written down some seven years ago. Some of the prophecies delivered by John Taylor on that occasion were related to the writer nearly thirty years ago, by his son John W. Taylor, and that relating agreed in detail with the

testimony borne by the two eye witnesses.

*Byron Harvey Allred, A Leaf in Review, 1929, Page 183-190. (According to Polygamy Story, Chapter 1, this account may have been recorded in 1925)*

The persecution reached its highest point in 1886 and many leading men, both outside the church and in, were looking for some solution of the trouble. It was proposed to make an agreement to discontinue the practices, which had been revealed to them from heaven. A document was written and taken to the President of the Church, then in hiding and exile. The first councilor to the President, George Q. Cannon, ask[ed] his file leader to obtain the mind and will of the Lord on this subject. This important event occurred on the night of September 26, 1886, at the residence of John W. Woolley in Centerville, Utah. President John Taylor went into his room, the windows and doors had been securely fastened and bolted and a guard placed to see that no one should interfere.

About nine o'clock that night the guard and others in the adjoining room noticed bright lights shining out through the opening under and around the door and heard voices in the room. They heard three distinct voices up to about midnight and two voices after midnight and continuing until morning. The guard became alarmed and desired to make an investigation, as he was responsible to see that no one interfered or discovered the hiding place of the Prophet. But the Spirit spoke peace to him, telling him that all was well.

The guard ask[ed], "who was the other person in the room?"

To which the President replied, "It was your Lord." Then the President of the Church sat down and wrote the revelation of 1886 and had his clerk make five copies, which were given to five members present. He then said, "I would rather suffer my right hand to be cut off than to sign such a thing or my tongue to be cut off before I would sanction it." He then stood and spoke for eight hours filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Among other things he told those assembled, that it had been shown to him that, although he would refuse to sign such a document, that his successor would sign one like unto it. And he told them of the conditions this action would bring about in the Church; how they would drift into darkness and error, and that the day would come when the Church itself would take up the persecution against those advocating the living of higher principles, and farther that they would even go so far as to cut those off the Church who openly declared a belief in these things. He said,

“The day will come when fifty percent of the Church will apostatize because of unholy living and non-payment of tithes, and of those who are left half of them will leave the Church because of the principle for which we are in hiding; ‘and’ I doubt if ten percent of the Priesthood will remain true to their covenants.”

After this meeting was dismissed, five or six remained and President Taylor laid his hands on most of these and gave them a commission to see to it that not a year should pass that children were not born under that covenant; and conferred upon them the sealing power of Elijah in its fullness.

*Laman Manasseh Victorious, William K. Ray, 1931, p. 95-96.*

Baldwin Radio Plant, after 4 p.m., Fall 1922 - In one of these meetings Professor Josiah Hickman from Logan came to learn about some facts. What he wanted to know was in connection with what took place in 1886. That meeting lasted for several hours. It was a long one. Professor Hickman was greatly surprised when told of what took place in that year. At the conclusion of the interview he asked Lorin for permission to reveal certain things which took place in September, 1886, at the eight hour meeting. Lorin forbade him to reveal them in full, but there were some things he could tell. In this meeting Dan (Bateman) related some things which had happened, and told of others which was yet to take place. And as he told them, and as Lorin confirmed them, both would occasionally walk up and down the office room with tears running down their faces. It was in this meeting, and so far as I know, it was the first time that Dan admitted he had seen the Prophet Joseph Smith. He testified he saw him at the eight hour meeting of 1886. Lorin recited some of the things President John Taylor there taught, what was said against the proposed Manifesto, that he would rather have his hand severed from his body and his tongue torn from the roof of his mouth than either sign or sanction that document; and while saying it, he was elevated from the floor by the power of God. Lorin would turn to Dan and say, “And I can prove these things by this living witness (pointing to Dan) who was there.” At this John Y. [Barlow] jumped to his feet, and said, “You never in your life told me you had seen the Prophet Joseph Smith.” Dan said, “There are a lot of things I have left for Lorin to tell you.” ...

*(Recollection of Moroni Jessop, Interviewed by Arnold Boss, 26 February 1942.)*



One memory that stood out in the lives of all the Woolley children and grandchildren was that of having President John Taylor and many other General Authorities stay for a period of time in the John Woolley home. There was a hollow in back of the John Woolley home where they played horseshoes and baseball. Lorin C. Woolley had a photogenic mind and he used to ride back and forth from Salt Lake and bring them information from the church offices.

One night Lorin Woolley was on guard outside. He saw a bright light shining out of President Taylor's window and he heard voices. He was afraid someone had slipped passed him unnoticed so he stepped to the window. He could hear three voices conversing in a very peaceful manner and a calm feeling came over him that assured him all was right! The next morning he asked President Taylor about it, and was told he had heard the voices of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Savior. They had come to reassure President Taylor that polygamy was sanctioned of the Lord.

At one time Brother Richards was listening as Lorin Woolley was recounting to President Taylor exactly what he heard the men saying who were at that time sorely persecuting the leaders. And he said, "You mustn't let that boy talk like that!" President Taylor assured him that he needed to know the very inflections of their voice in order to know exactly how to handle the situation. They never suspected this teenage boy and he was never stopped. Shortly thereafter, President Taylor left the Woolley home, went to Kaysville and passed away there.

*The City In-Between, History of Centerville, Utah ... , 1975, Centerville, Utah, p. 47 & 49.*

My grandfather, Louis Kelsch, Sr., bore a testimony of being invited by Brother Lorin Woolley to go to Salt Lake City to the Zions Bank. There, Lorin Woolley opened up his safety deposit box and took out a handwritten copy of the 1886 Revelation in President John Taylor's own handwriting which he showed to Louis Kelsch. J. Leslie Broadbent's wife, Rula, bore testimony of this into her 90<sup>th</sup> year and was heard by many witnesses.

*Sallee Jessop, Testimony given in Herriman, Utah, 1997. As printed in 1886 Addendum, Deseret Historical Dept., September 1998.*

## Daniel R. Bateman

Bro. Dan Bateman then told of his experience with Pres. John Taylor in 1886 and 1887. He said that on the night of Sept. 26, 1886 after Pres. Taylor had been almost driven wild by communications and letters from Presidents of Stakes, Bishops, and High Councilmen and many members of the Church asking and pleading and demanding that something be done to stop the practice of plural marriage, the persecution was so great that Pres. Taylor and other leading brethren were forced to go from place to place in hiding because their lives were threatened. While at the home of Bro. John Woolley in Centerville, Pres. Taylor retired to a room and prayed earnestly to the Lord concerning these trials. While thus engaged, he received a revelation; and on the following day, (Sept. 27, 1886) in the presence of 13 people, he preached the pure gospel for 8 hours, during which time he told them of his revelation and asked them if they were willing to lay down their lives if need be for this principle and they all agreed they would. Then they entered into a solemn covenant and promised that they would see to it that not a year should pass without plural marriages being performed and children born under the covenant. During this 8 hours Pres. Taylor stood in mid-air two feet above the floor and in a halo of light, and while speaking (of the manifesto to stop the practice of plural marriage, which had already cunningly schemed and planned and then urged his signature - raised his right arm to the square and said, "Sign that document - Never! I would suffer my right arm to be severed from my body. Sanction that document - Never! I would rather my tongue be torn from its roots." And shortly after that time, men in every Stake in the Church from Canada to Mexico were set apart and authorized to perform plural marriages. Four of that little number at Bro. Woolley's are now living. They are Bro. John Woolley (now 90 years old still living in Centerville and the oldest member of the Church), Lorin Woolley, Bro. Earl and Dan Bateman. Bro. Bateman said, "I testify to this in fulfillment of the covenant I made with President Taylor 37 years ago. This practice will never cease."

*Joseph Lyman Jessop Journal, 28 March 1923*

I was privileged to be at the meeting of September 27, 1886, spoken of by Brother Woolley, I myself acting as one of the guards for the brethren during those exciting times.

The proceedings of the meeting as related by Brother Woolley are correct in every detail. I was not present [in the room] when the five spoken of by Brother Woolley were set apart for special work, but have on different occasions heard the details of the same related by Lorin C. Woolley and John W. Woolley, and from all the circumstances with which I am familiar, I firmly believe the testimony of these two brethren to be true.

*4 May 1934, Daniel R. Bateman, Sworn Statement, Truth magazine 7:277.*

On September 27, 1886, I was at a meeting at the home of John Woolley at Centerville in Davis County, Utah, as one of the guards of President John Taylor, who was then at the home of Brother Woolley, on the underground. Others who were present were John Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley, President George Q. Cannon, Brother Nuttall, and there were others.

The Manifesto had been prepared for President Taylor to sign. He had made it a matter of prayer, and the next morning in addressing himself to the subject, he was lifted off the floor and a halo of light was around his body; and he made the statement that he would suffer his hand to be severed from his body rather than place his signature to that document, and rather than endorse it he would suffer his tongue to be torn from its roots in his mouth.

He asked those present if they were willing to consecrate all that they had to the furtherance of the cause of righteousness in case it is requested of them. They responded they were. He asked if they were willing to give up their lives for the truth in the event it was required. They answered they were.

He then placed them under covenant to uphold and sustain the principles of the Gospel, particularly the principle of the Patriarchal Order of Marriage, from thence on as long as they lived. He said, 'Some of you will live to be handled for sustaining and upholding this principle for which we are now in hiding. Some of you will live to see the time when there will scarcely be a family among the Latter day Saints that will be united on all the principles of the Gospel.' He said the time will come when one-half of the people will apostatize over the principle of Celestial Marriage, and perhaps one-half of the other half.

He counseled us not to begin our work until told to do so by proper authority. That much of the instruction he was giving we would forget, but that at the proper time it would come back to us.

*Daniel R. Bateman Affidavit, 1934, Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant, p. 26.*

“Daniel R. Bateman ... bore testimony that Mormonism is true, his father being one of the five set apart, did not tell him so, but did testify to Brother Finlayson, and the latter had written to him of the event.”

*Journal of Joseph W. Musser, 21 December 1936.*

During the years of 1886 and 1887, and during the terrible tirade against the Latter-day Saint Church for the practice of Plural or Celestial Marriage, and while President John Taylor and George Q. Cannon were undergrounding at the home of Brother Carlisle, which was located Westerly from the present site of the Murray Laundry, at Murray, Utah, and whose home was located near the Jordan River, and also at the home of John W. Woolley at Centerville, Davis County, Utah, at the latter place a marvelous manifestation of the Holy Ghost and appearance of two heavenly beings occurred.

I was one of the bodyguards of President John Taylor during this period of time. During the month of September, 1886, and while at John W. Woolley's residence there was a powerful influence exercised by and from many sources by letter and otherwise from some who were living in plural marriage and from men who were presiding in the various offices of the Church who were not living in that relation. They all urged that something be done to satisfy the Gentiles so their property would not be confiscated.

George Q. Cannon, on his own initiative, selected a committee comprising of himself, Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin D. Richards, John T. Caine and James Jack to get up a statement or Manifesto that would meet the objections urged by the above named.

On September 26, 1886, George Q. Cannon, Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin S. Richards and some others met with President Taylor at Brother John W. Woolley's residence, at Centerville, Davis County, Utah, and presented a manifesto document for his consideration. President Cannon suggested that President Taylor take it up with the Lord and make a decision on the manifesto the next day. President Taylor replied: “Do you think that I would decide on such an important matter as that without taking it to the Lord and get His decision and final word on the matter?”

President Taylor retired at about nine o'clock on the evening of September 26, 1886. The sleeping rooms were inspected by the guard as was the custom. President Taylor's room had no outside door. The windows were heavily screened.

Soon after President Taylor retired a light was seen under the door leading to his room and the guard was startled to hear three persons talking in President Taylor's room. An examination was made by the bodyguard and watchman to see if all of the windows were still screened and if the only door to the room was bolted, which proved to be the fact. And while examining the last window a voice spoke to the guard saying, "Can't you feel the Spirit? Why should you worry?" The voices continued in the room until midnight, when one of them left, and the other two continued. One of the voices was President Taylor's and the other two were two heavenly messengers, as shown by the following:

*[paraphrases Lorin Woolley 1929 account]*

When President Taylor came out of his room about eight o'clock of the morning of September 27, 1886, one could scarcely look at him on account of the brightness of his face.

He stated, "Brethren, I have had a very pleasant conversation all night with Brother Joseph, the Prophet." He was asked who the third person was and the President replied that "it was your Lord."

All present assembled in a meeting and President Taylor called the meeting to order. He had the Manifesto, that had been prepared by George Q. Cannon, and read it over again. He then put each one in the meeting under a covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle.

By that time we were all filled with the Holy Ghost. After placing us under covenant, he placed his finger on the document, his person rising from the floor about a foot, and with countenance animated by the Spirit of God, and raising his right hand to the square, he said, "Sign that document, - never! I would suffer my right hand to be severed from my body first. Sanction it, - never! I would suffer my tongue to be torn from its roots in my mouth before I would sanction it!"

After that he talked for about an hour and then sat down and wrote the revelation which was given him by the Lord upon the question of Plural Marriage which I made a copy from the original

written in the handwriting of President Taylor and which is as follows:

*[Quotes 1886 Revelation]*

After writing the above revelation, President Taylor made the following remarks: *[quoting the Woolley account]*

“I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the seventh president, and that there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.”

In addition to the foregoing I was at a meeting at Draper, Salt Lake County, Utah, when President George Q. Cannon spoke, shortly before his death as follows:

“The day will come when man's priesthood and authority will be called into question, and you will find out that there will be hundreds who will have no priesthood, but who believe they hold it, they holding only an office in the Church.”

*[quotes Joseph F. Smith, Improvement Era 4:394 (1901) regarding Priesthood conferral]*

This applies to the Melchizedek as well as the Aaronic Priesthood.

Since about the year 1920 the method used is to ordain the person direct to the office in the Priesthood, who have not previously had the Priesthood conferred upon him, without conferring the Priesthood first upon him.

In 1886 I was 29 years of age when the revelation above stated, was given to President John Taylor and I am, so far as I know, the only one living who witnessed the marvelous manifestations given through and by President John Taylor and the information I have herein related. I have been true and faithful to all of my covenants I have ever made and believe the whole gospel and the fullness thereof and at the age of 81 years I have a clearness of mind and alertness of intellect and I know that all I herein say is true. I know that my Redeemer lives and that no man will ever enter into the fulness of His glory unless he complies with the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage as revealed, in the 132nd Section of the Doctrine and Covenants to the Prophet Joseph Smith. If we go where Abraham is we must do the works of Abraham.

*[Signed]* Daniel R. Bateman

Witnessed and signed in the presence of: Ida May Bateman,

Arthur Gordon, David W. Jeffs  
*Truth 8:44-46 (July 1942)*

## **Samuel Bateman**

In 1888 John M. Whitaker recorded in his Diary that Samuel Bateman (who had been at the 1886 meeting) had told him of some “very interesting incidents that occurred while he was with the late President John Taylor,” but he says he did not include them because they didn’t fit in with the direction the Church was then taking.

*See John M. Whitaker Journal, entry for 16 September 1888.*

*Statement (Affadavit) of Melba F. Allred -*

“When my father, Reginald P. Finlayson, was sixteen years old, which would have been in 1898, and was living in West Jordan, he was with his father, Thomas Finlayson, when Samuel Bateman, a close friend and neighbor, related to them what had taken place at the home of John W. Woolley in Centerville, Utah on the 26th and 27th of September 1886.

He told of the visitation of the Savior and the Prophet Joseph Smith to President John Taylor during the night of the 26th and then he described the Eight-hour meeting and all John Taylor had said there, including the reading of the revelation President Taylor had received, and also how he had five men set apart - giving them authority to seal saints in the holy principle of Celestial Plural Marriage and charged them to see that it was kept alive and be sure that children were born in the Everlasting Covenant every year.

Samuel Bateman was one of the five men set apart for that special work at the time, so his testimony that my father heard was true and accurate.”

*Melba F. Allred, subscribed and sworn - 28 November 1991, see 1936 account of Daniel Bateman for additional co-oberation.*

Samuel spoke of the 8 hour meeting in Centerville, the sermon of John Taylor there and the subsequent calling of certain men there.

*Life of Samuel Bateman (some time before 1911), Olive A.K. Neilson, 1944 (from info given to her by Mrs. LeRoy Bateman)*

I had a personal interview, August 20, 1996 with E. Bateman, whose

father was Dan Bateman, and grandfather was Samuel Bateman.

She said, "My father and grandfather spoke all their lives about the eight hour meeting. They knew Pres. John Taylor and those who participated in the 1886 meeting. They were there."

*1886, Deseret Historical Dept., Sept. 1996, p. 204.*

## **John W. Taylor**

My father, when President of the Church, sought to find a way to evade the conflict between the saints and the government on the question of plural marriage, but the Lord said it was an eternal and unchangeable law and must stand.

*30 September 1890, Abraham H. Cannon Journal*

John W. Taylor spoke in relation to the Manifesto: "I do not know that thing was right, though I voted to sustain it, and will assist to maintain it; but among my father's papers I found a revelation given him of the Lord, and which is now in my possession, in which the Lord told him that the principle of plural marriage would never be overcome. Pres. Taylor desired to have it suspended, but the Lord would not permit it to be done."

*29 March 1892, Abraham H. Cannon Journal*

John W. [Taylor] referred to the circumstances on several occasions and told how his father was in hiding in the home of John W. Woolley at Centerville the night it [the 1886 revelation] was received. That Lorin Woolley was on guard in the next room and witnessed a strange light under President Taylor's door.

*1 September 1934, Nellie Taylor (wife of John W. Taylor), Journal of Douglas M. Todd, Sr.*

"It was on a Sunday evening, September 26, 1886," the man said.

"President John Taylor was hiding out with his bodyguards at the home of John W. Woolley's home in Centerville. He had been on the underground for a year and a half ...

President Taylor had received a revelation on the Principle the previous night. Copies were made, which he gave to five men present, setting them aside as Apostles and Patriarchs, with the mission to keep the Principle alive until the Savior should return to earth. During this ceremony the Prophet Joseph appeared in person



to direct the proceedings. The five men were placed under covenant to see to it that no year passed by, while they lived, without children being born into the Principle; and they were given authority to set others apart for the same purpose.”

*Family Kingdom, Samuel W. Taylor, p. 292-294*

## **George Earl**

We attended the funeral of John W. Woolley [Dec. 15, 1928] in the stone Church in Centerville, Utah. My husband and I took Daniel R. Bateman there by automobile from his home in Midvale, Utah. We arrived shortly before commencing time. In fact, we were among the first to enter the building on that occasion. “Uncle” Dan, as we often lovingly addressed Brother Bateman, noted that Brother George Earl was up front placing songbooks in the choir seats.

Brother Bateman motioned us to follow and went forward to greet him. They met with hearty handshakes. “Uncle” Dan introduced my husband and me as well known and trusted friends, while placing one hand on Brother Earl's shoulder and one on my husband's. Brother Bateman then requested him, as one more witness, to tell us his testimony as a participant in the events of September 26 and 27, 1886.

Brother Earl, having greeted us with brotherly cordiality, looked at his watch observing that it was less than twenty minutes until funeral time. He further stated that he had other preparations to make for the funeral and expressed regret that there would not be time. Then he brightened. Placing a hand on Uncle Dan's shoulder he said in substance as follows:

“Since there will not be time to relate it now I want to tell you young people this: Whatever Dan has told you about that meeting I will verify as the truth!”

This manifestation of confidence he had in Dan Bateman was uplifting. We parted with expressions of gratitude as Brother Earl resumed his work.... I met George Earl only once. I believe that he was true to his testimony to the end.

*Rhea Kunz, A Leaf in Review, 2nd ed., appendix 2, p. 237-*

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On this day J.W. Musser, Daniel R. Bateman, Moroni Jessop and Louis A. Kelsch visited George Earl of Centerville, who was

reported as being one of the thirteen at the special meeting held September 27, 1886 at the home of John W. Woolley. We questioned Brother Earl as to what he knew regarding the proceedings at the meeting in question. He could remember but little of the details. He was 15 years old at the time, was a chore boy and was in and out, but he remembered such a meeting though he did not remember, in detail, the instructions given .... He knew why the brethren were there, and all were sworn to the strictest secrecy. With emphasis he stated: "John W. Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley, and Dan Bateman were all truthful men," and that he would stake his life on their word. He believes what they said about the meeting and the purpose of it, though much of the details he either did not hear, as he was in and out of the house during the meeting, or did not remember.

*Joseph W. Musser Book of Remembrance, p. 86, 3 November 1936 (See Truth 2:8:118, January 1937, and also George Earl Statement, 2 August 1949)*

I [George Earl] was a teenager at the time [of the Eight Hour Meeting], and I was doing chores in the Woolley home, and I was going in and out of the house ... I knew there was a meeting going on but I didn't know what it was all about.

*Reminiscences on Priesthood, p. 10, Morris Q. Kunz account of a conversation with George Earl, 16 December 1928*

## **Others**

A.B. Irvine told me that Apostle Woodruff told him that a certain number of worthy people had been commissioned to keep alive the principle of plural marriage.

*Carl Ashby Badger (Reed Smoot's secretary) Journal, 8 October 1904.*

President Taylor died in exile for this principle and he gave men authority to perform the ceremony of marriage which authority I have been told was never revoked.

*19 Oct 1906, Mission President to Francis M. Lyman, Origins of Power, p. 809.*

He [George Q. Cannon] said that President John Taylor had, during his lifetime, under the direction of the Lord, perfected arrangements

for the perpetuation of plural marriage even after the Church should reject its practice.

*Joseph W. Musser, Truth 7:277, May 1942*

When the account of the 1886 meeting was related to a small assembly of the Saints in California, "One of the brethren quite advanced in years" said, "Why, I remember when I was a boy of but twelve, and residing in Davis County, of having had these things related to me. Many times these details were given, but I thought little of it at the time. I know these things are true for I heard them as a boy. And they were given to me by trustworthy men."

*Truth 9:10, June 1943.*

I saw the letter [from Joseph F. Smith to Byron Harvey Allred]. Pres. Joseph F. Smith said in the letter, "I was in the Hawaiian Islands at the time of the Eight Hour Meeting, and I was called home and told to go to the Woolley home in Centerville. ... I went there and President Taylor told me of the Eight Hour Meeting and put me under a covenant and set me apart, the same as those who were at the Eight Hour Meeting."

*Owen A. Allred, Related 31 March 1996*

There was a revelation that John Taylor received and we have it in his handwriting. We've analyzed the handwriting. It is John Taylor's handwriting and the revelation is reproduced by the Fundamentalists...The revelation is dated September 27; that fits the account of the meeting, 1886.

*Dr. Reed C. Durham, President of the Mormon History Association and L.D.S. Coordinator of Seminaries and Institutes in Salt Lake City, in a High Priest Meeting of the Salt Lake Foothill Stake, on 24th February 1974.*

## **An Uninterrupted Line Of Authority**

Whether we carry it in our wallet or top pocket, or have it written out like a certificate in our family or personal history, or whether we can recite it (names, offices, dates and all), our line of authority is something we consider to be very special. It is our link back to the Savior, and the Prophet Joseph. It shows that a power which has existed since the beginning of the world, and was even used to organize the world, has been entrusted to us, to use within our families for their salvation, and for the building up of God's kingdom.

Whilst ministers of other faiths may wear ceremonial robes to identify their importance, we have the knowledge that we can trace back to Jesus the right to administer in His name, and there is no greater honor or privilege. The scriptures, both ancient and modern, contain the lines of authority of many righteous individuals, showing that it is considered important enough by God to be included in the canon of scripture, as a proof that such authority is necessary to perform the ordinances of the Gospel, and has existed whenever the Gospel has been upon the earth.

When we received the Priesthood, we probably took it for granted that the person ordaining us had the authority himself to perform that rite, just as he would have placed the same implicit trust in those who had given him that authority. We may have assured ourselves, or just out of interest asked to look at their Priesthood line, and undoubtedly found everything in order as it should be. We couldn't imagine someone who didn't have the Priesthood accidentally or intentionally performing an ordinance, or even setting apart or ordaining someone else. But we realize if such a thing did happen it wouldn't be considered valid, and would have to be redone, or the person the ordinance was performed upon might unknowingly try to perform it on someone else, and quickly a situation would occur where there would be a great number of people who believed they have the right authority but didn't actually hold it.

### **An Important Prophecy**

A few years before the turn of the century, George Q. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency, felt impressed to make a prophesy

on this subject and stress its importance. He said, "I believe the time will come when it will be necessary for every man to trace the line in which he has received the Priesthood that he exercises. It is therefore of great importance in our Church that records should be kept, and that every man should know whence he derives his authority - from what source, through what channel he has received the holy Priesthood, and by what right he exercises that authority and administers the ordinances thereof. I believe this is of extreme importance, and that where there are doubts as to a man's legitimately exercising that authority, that doubt should be removed. Every man should be careful on this point, to know where he gets his Priesthood; that it has come to him clean and undefiled, legitimately;"<sup>1</sup>

## **Our Responsibility**

It is hard to imagine anyone disagreeing with his words, especially when we take into account the confusion that would result if there was any question over the validity of a person's ordination and any ordinances they have performed, and the difficulties that would follow as we've previously outlined. Sadly, although he laid great stress on accurate records being kept of ordinations, forms have been simplified to a point that, "With the limited information now being recorded, it is no longer possible to trace individual Priesthood authority lines."<sup>2</sup> And so the responsibility of ensuring that ordinances and ordinations are carried out with the correct authority lies with each individual Church member.

## **The Correct Method of Ordination**

When a person is first ordained to an office within the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, the Priesthood Handbook outlines a specific order which must be followed: The person ordaining must lay their hands on the head of the recipient, and call them by name, stating the authority by which the ordinance is performed. The Priesthood is then conferred, if it has not been previously. Then, ordination to a specific office, bestowing all the

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1 18 October 1884, Journal of Discourses 26:24.

2 Glenn N. Rowe, Director of Special Projects in the Church Historical Department, Ensign, July 1994, p. 67.

rights, powers and authority pertaining to that office are given. Following which, words of counsel may be given as the Spirit dictates, and it is closed in the name of Jesus Christ. Within the living memory of most Church members, this format has changed very little, so were someone to diverge from it, they would immediately bring attention to themselves, and would almost definitely be corrected.

This pattern of ordination is essentially the same as it was in the Savior's day. When John the Baptist ordained Joseph and Oliver, he said, "Upon my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron"<sup>1</sup> John added "that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood he said, would in due time would be conferred on them."<sup>2</sup> One thing was consistent on both occasions; the Priesthood was conferred first.

## **No Priesthood Without Conferral**

The Church was not organized until after the Priesthood was given, and until the Church existed there were no offices within it to specifically ordain anyone to. As a revelation later clarified, "All other authorities and offices in the Church are appendages to the Priesthood."<sup>3</sup> Brigham Young recalled that Joseph told him many times concerning ordinations, "Do not forget to confer the High Priesthood upon them."<sup>4</sup> Joseph had received the Priesthood by conferral, and gave strict instruction that a man should have the Priesthood conferred upon him, before being ordained to any offices therein.

An interesting question is, what if a person was ordained to an office without having the Priesthood conferred upon him? In other words, if someone is ordained an Elder (for example), but the person officiating forgets to give them the Priesthood by conferral, then has the person being ordained actually received the Priesthood? This is a question many members have raised to various Church leaders since: the Apostle, Abraham H. Cannon records in his journal, "A question was asked as to whether a man who held no

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1 29 May 1829, Joseph Smith-History 1:69; Doctrine and Covenants 13:1.

2 Joseph Smith-History 1:72.

3 28 March 1835, Doctrine and Covenants 107:5.

4 Deseret News, 6 June 1877.

Priesthood and on being ordained a Seventy [who] did not have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon him, was really the possessor of the Priesthood? I maintained that it was necessary to say in the ordination that this was conferred upon him; otherwise he did not possess it.”<sup>1</sup>

If Elder Cannon's words are not considered conclusive enough, President Joseph F. Smith, gave us a definitive answer; “the conferring of the Priesthood should precede and accompany ordination to office, unless it is possessed by previous bestowal and ordination. Surely a man cannot possess an appendage to the Priesthood without possessing the Priesthood itself, which he cannot obtain unless it be authoritatively conferred upon him.”<sup>2</sup> This is a definitive answer, a man cannot hold a Priesthood office, without having the Priesthood conferred upon him.

### **A Change in Performing Ordinations**

Who could disagree with the clear and simple teaching of Joseph, Brigham, and Joseph F. Smith? Interestingly, Charles W. Penrose, Counselor to President Smith, must have disagreed with him on this point, and said shortly after his death, “We have been making a mistake in ordinations. We have been conferring the Priesthood, and it ought not to be done. ... We should ordain directly to the office in the Priesthood.”<sup>3</sup> Instead of correcting Penrose, Heber J. Grant implemented his views, and on the 23rd of April 1921 the First Presidency announced a new form of ordinations in which the words “confer upon you the Melchizedek Priesthood” were removed. How could such a thing happen?

How could the standard of ordination change? No revelation was given as justification. If the previous Prophets and Apostles would have considered such ordinations invalid, then what about those ordained without having the Priesthood conferred upon them, what were they to do? This change to the ordination policy raised many questions, but no answers were forthcoming. If this was the state of affairs up to the present day, then some might seriously question whether the Priesthood was lost completely, and only offices and callings in the Church remain. However Joseph was

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1 Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 20 March 1887.

2 March 1901, Improvement Era 4:394.

3 Stake Quarterly Conference, Utah Stake, Provo, Utah, 1919, as recollected by Daniel R. Peay.

promised, “The Priesthood will never be taken away”<sup>1</sup> and so the Priesthood must have been maintained up to the present day, but how?

## **Prophecies Fulfilled**

George Q. Cannon, upon whose prophesy we began this subject, also foresaw these events and their outcome, and said, “The day will come when men's Priesthood and authority will be called into question, and you will find out that there will be hundreds who have no Priesthood, but believe they hold it, they holding only an office in the Church.”<sup>2</sup> President John Taylor also seemed aware of the events that would take place when he told a group of Saints, “I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at that time of the seventh President, and there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.”<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that he said that these things would happen in the time of the seventh President of the Church, who of course was Heber J. Grant.

By 1955 at least one General Authority was beginning to teach that the Priesthood should be conferred. In the Summer of that year a member of the Church named Mont Woolley wrote to Joseph Fielding Smith, as there had been confusion among the Priesthood in his ward, about the method of ordination. President Smith replied that, “When your Bishop, or President of Stake, or anyone else, by appointment ordains a youth or man to the Priesthood he should confer the Priesthood, whether a Deacon or an Elder, and then ordain to the office when the Priesthood is once conferred, it is not conferred again.” Two years later, in the April of 1957, David O. McKay announced its reinstatement.

## **Unauthorized Administrations**

There are 36 years which cannot be easily explained away, between the time Heber J. Grant removed conferral of the

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1 Millennial Star 8:139, see D&C 84:17.

2 1901, Draper, Utah, as related by Daniel R. Bateman.

3 27 September 1886, John W. Woolley Home, Centerville, Utah. As related by Lorin C. Woolley.



Priesthood, and President McKay put it back again. If we are to believe all of the Presidents of the Church to the present day - except Heber & George A. Smith - then during that period the ordinations were invalid. If they were invalid, then those wrongly ordained do not hold the Priesthood, and any they ordained do not hold it either. As Brigham Young said, "No being can give that which he does not possess; consequently, no man can confer the Priesthood on another, if he has not himself first received it."<sup>1</sup> However surprisingly President McKay made no effort to ordering the re-conferral of the Priesthood on everyone ordained during that time, and the re-performance of every ordinance by anyone ordained during that time, and so the situation has worsened considerably.

Even though the evidence is before us, it doesn't make it any easier to accept it. We may have seen healings carried out, or felt the spirit during blessings, and wonder how this could happen, if in fact the power of the Priesthood was not involved. The book of Luke records how the Apostles came across a similar circumstance, and how the Savior instructed them on this matter: "And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid [him] not: for he that is not against us is for us."<sup>2</sup> Jesus taught that signs such as healing, casting out evil spirits, etc., would follow those who believe, whether male or female, whether holding the Priesthood or not.<sup>3</sup> So, such gifts do not always indicate that someone has the authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, no matter how sincere their intent is, or how many spiritual experiences they have.

If we were to look at our own line of authority and notice that in it someone was ordained between 1921 and 1957 then it would raise a question over the validity of that ordination, and the Priesthood we hold (or possibly don't). Even if no-one in our line was ordained between that time, then we look at the authority of those who baptized or confirmed us, and who performed those ordinances on them, etc. John Taylor believed that, "If there be any doubt respecting the sufficiency of the ordination, [it would be] far better to remove it by giving him another ordination that will leave no room for question than to have disputes about its validity."<sup>4</sup>

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1 History of the Church 4:257.

2 Luke 9:49-50; Mark 9:39-40.

3 Mark 16:17-18.

4 Seventies Council Minutes, 30 March 1887.

## Authority Maintained

At the same meeting at which President Taylor made his prophesy that Priesthood would be incorrectly given, he set apart several of those present to ensure that the Priesthood, it's keys, and many of it's most important principles would be kept alive, anticipating that the Church would make many of the changes it later did. Those he ordained (including George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith) also were given the authority to ordain others to carry on the Priesthood and it's principles, so that there would never be a time when the Priesthood authority did not exist to keep alive the ordinances of the Gospel, and so that, in the prophetic words of Apostle Franklin D. Richards, "The Priesthood in the last days has to be manifested in sufficient power to bear off the Kingdom of God triumphant."<sup>1</sup>

Although the Lord before this point may have blessed us with a portion of His Spirit - because the intent of our heart was to do His will - with the knowledge we now possess, it is no longer enough to carry on as before. We are now left without any excuse, and will be accountable for what we have learned. One of the most important ways we can uphold the Church, is by maintaining the foundation on which it was built, and perpetuating God's Priesthood and it's ordinances in the form in which He restored them. To do this we must ensure our Priesthood has come through an uninterrupted and untainted line, and seek out those who maintain such authority. Without taking this action there will always be doubt over the validity of the ordinances we have received and those we have performed, and the nagging question remaining of whether - when this life is over - we will find that our efforts have been acceptable before our Heavenly Father, or just been in vain.

## Addendum

In a booklet by anti-Mormon-Fundamentalist, Brian C. Hales<sup>2</sup>, he quotes George Q. Cannon's opinions on ordination in his attempt to disprove President John Taylor's prophesy that many members "would not have the Priesthood properly conferred upon them". Whilst it is true that there seemed to be a couple of alternative methods of

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1 6 October 1853, Journal of Discourses 1:321.

2 Is Fundamentalism Fundamental?

ordination in use in the mid-1890s, and that President Cannon personally seemed to feel that either of them were valid, yet both of those methods made it clear that a person was being ordained into “the Melchizedek Priesthood”<sup>1</sup>, and not “in the Church” as Heber J. Grant’s revision states<sup>2</sup>.

President Cannon would not have agreed with President Grant’s alteration of the method of ordination, as Cannon stated that “care should be taken to bestow the authority”, and gives the conferral of Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver by John the Baptist as an ideal<sup>3</sup>. Brother Cannon also believed that the Lord could “direct exactly what should be said” “either by direct revelation or by inspiring his servants of the First Presidency”<sup>4</sup>. This happened in 1901 with Joseph F. Smith’s declaration that the Priesthood must be conferred<sup>5</sup>. The standard was then set, and whatever ambiguity there may have been on the subject before that point, from that moment onwards any deviation from the method given by the Lord’s prophet – such as the 1921 alterations – would not be approved by Him.

The removal of Priesthood conferral in ordination is only one area in which John Taylor’s prophecy (and indeed the prophecy of Brother Cannon that our article began with) has been fulfilled. The revocation or alteration of any other ordinance can cause the withdrawal of Priesthood (or at least produces questions over its effectiveness) from those who sustain such changes or participate in such an altered Gospel. As an early Church publication put it, “... the priesthood can not continue when the gospel is perverted;”<sup>6</sup>. Whilst specific examples are beyond the scope of this particular treatment, yet many books and magazine articles have been written outlining such changes, and it remains up to us as faithful Latter-day Saints to personally receive and perpetuate the ordinances of God as He has given them, because as Joseph stated, “... that the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing.”<sup>7</sup>

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1 Juvenile Instructor 29:114, 1894.

2 Missionary Handbooks after 1921.

3 Juvenile Instructor 31:174-5, 1896.

4 Juvenile Instructor, 1894.

5 Improvement Era 4:394.

6 Times and Seasons, Nov. 15, 1841.

7 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p 169.

## 1886 – A Poetic Retelling

In the darkest hour, hidden from the world  
That sought the destruction of God's servant  
Men seeking concession a plan unfurled  
To persuade their prophet they were sent

“But,” he said, “the Lord's word must be sought”  
Man cannot hope to change the path to God  
And thus set the laws of heaven at naught  
Rather than holding to revelation as a their rod

So was the plan, to bed they retired  
Hoping tomorrow would bring divine will  
God's mouthpiece prayed to be inspired  
Promising all the Lord would reveal he'd fulfill

Light from his room startled the guard  
Whose mission it was to protect his sire  
No-one came, the windows were barred  
Yet nothing was wrong the Spirit did inspire

“Who was that with thee, dear brother?”  
The man asked of voices that he heard  
“Thou needs not fear it was your Savior  
And from him I have received God's word”

“And the other man who came after him?”  
“Twas none other than Prophet Joseph, my head  
Who told me not to bend to men's whims  
But to hold fast to the course he showed instead”

Trusted brethren all met after rising that morn  
To keep God's law they were put under covenant  
Prepared to withstand the world's scorn  
No matter what direction Church members went

When asked if concession he had considered  
Some plead the next day as brethren met together  
The answer came clear and loud, "never!"  
A way has been shown how it will go on forever

"Better, tongue was torn from roof of mouth"  
He said, "rather than sign our salvation away  
Or that my hand was severed I do avow  
Than to sign concessions I'd be swayed"

Then twas the divine revelation written  
"I have not revoked this law, nor will I"  
The voice of God declared from heaven  
Ending all thought of suspension thereby

"All those who would enter into my glory  
- must and shall obey my law," said the Lord  
Or by opposing, risk God's wrath and fury  
As upon the world who'd fight against His word

"You may yet have to surrender your lives  
If to God's law you wish to remain true  
You may lose profession, home, or wives  
But woe to those who bring troubles upon you"

Among the righteous Saints who live the principle  
In this covenant each year a child must be born  
Though to the world it may seem reprehensible  
Your God will honor you, amidst society's scorn

The faithful men had to them authority given  
And ability to ordain others as and when  
To carry out the designs of the laws of heaven  
That this work will go on until the end

Above the ground the prophet did stand  
And light emanated from his shining face  
Such a sign no doubt God had planned  
To show His devout servant acted in His place

Many things from memory would be hidden  
Details realized as prophesy was fulfilled  
Restored to mind when needed from heaven  
Being but another testimony of God's will

Following many's refusal to obey God's law  
Three-quarters of the Saints will apostatize  
Few ever considered living the Gospel to the full  
So only a handful of the elect will even realize

But through acceptance of an advisory declaration  
Those who concede won't be able to attain eternal life  
Revocation of virtuous laws will lead to whoredom  
Whilst choicest seed comes to man with several wives

When seventh President presides it is prophesied  
That even God's holy temple will be mortgaged  
But One Mighty and Strong in such an era will arise  
To release the Church from its spiritual bondage

Although men will believe the Priesthood they hold  
Whilst wrongly conferred, only an office is given  
They will not have the power to which they are called  
Nor be able to exercise the power of heaven

But upon faithful men a commission has been placed  
So that there always will be those with the authority  
And whatever persecution they may face  
There will be someone to perform holy ceremonies

Through these proceedings the Prophet stood by  
To ensure the Gospel would remain the same  
And although others these testimonies may deny  
God's laws will never be removed from the earth again